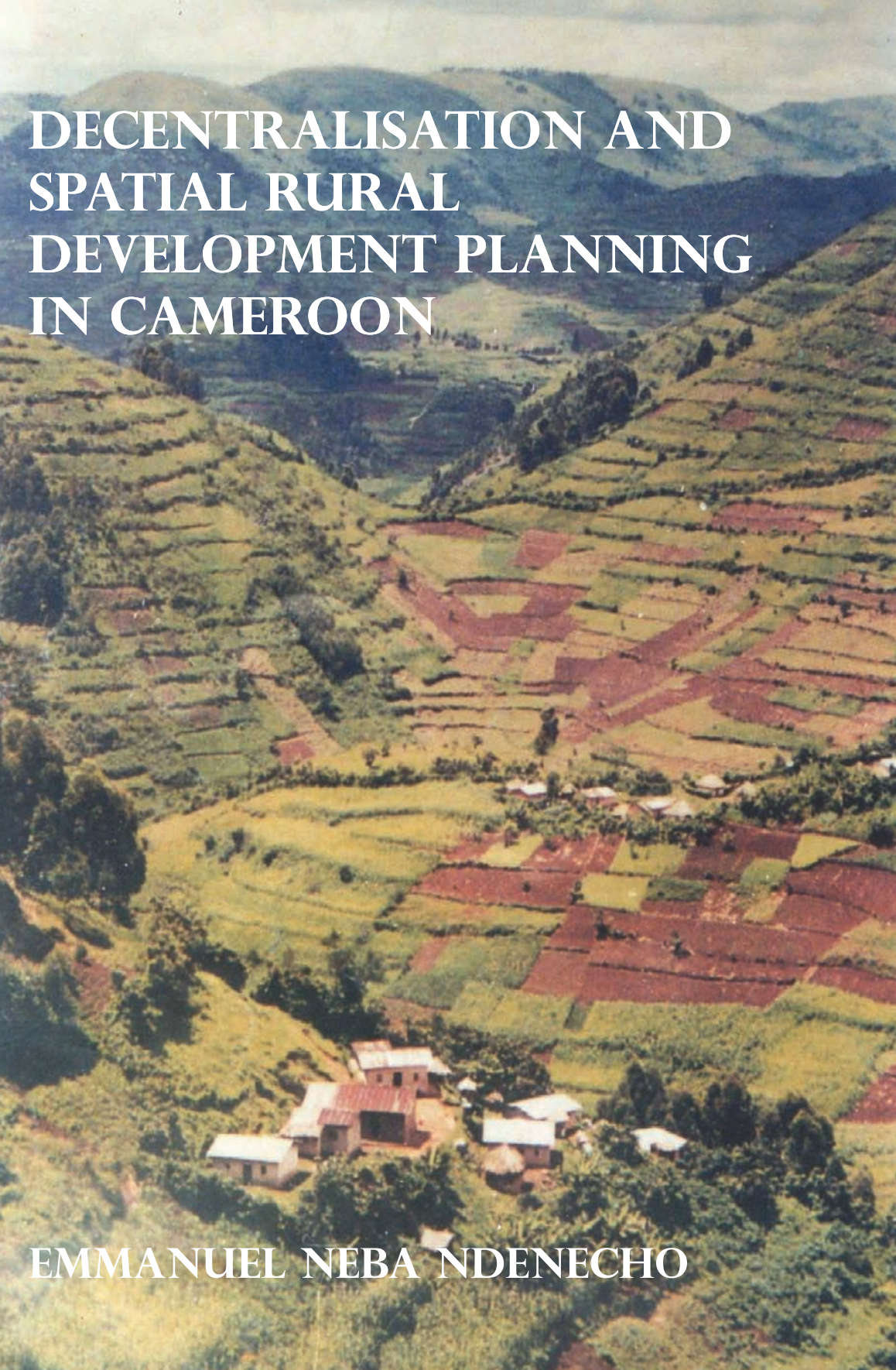


An aerial photograph of a rural landscape in Cameroon. The terrain is hilly and covered with terraced agricultural fields in various shades of green and brown. A small village with several buildings, including a prominent one with a red roof, is situated in the lower center. The background shows more hills under a clear sky.

DECENTRALISATION AND SPATIAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN CAMEROON

EMMANUEL NEBA NDENECHO

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Decentralisation and Spatial Rural Development Planning in Cameroon

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Langua Research & Publishing CIG
Mankon, Bamenda

Publisher:

Langaa RPCIG

Langaa Research & Publishing Common Initiative Group

P.O. Box 902 Mankon

Bamenda

North West Region

Cameroon

Langaagrp@gmail.com

www.langaa-rpcig.net

Distributed in and outside N. America by African Books Collective

orders@africanbookscollective.com

www.africanbookcollective.com

ISBN: 9956-717-66-5

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To my brothers
Nji Fordam
Asah Humphrey

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Abbreviations Used In This Book

- NGO: Non-governmental Organisation
- CBO: Community-based Organisation
- IRDP: Integrated Rural Development Project
- RRD: Regional Rural Development
- RRP: Regional Rural Development Planning
- DDP: District Development Projects
- NPC: National Planning Commission
- CDC: Cameroon Development Corporation
- SODECOTON: Societé de Développement du coton
- HEVECAM: Hévea – Cameroun
- SEMRY: Secteur Experimental de Modernisation de la Riziculture de Yagoua

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Acknowledgements

Thanks are expressed to several authors and recognition is given to their works in the realisation of this book. To ease reading the design of the book excludes a full list of references. I am grateful to the following for the reproduction of copyright material: Neba Aaron for Figure 2 and plate 8; Mendunga E.T.A. for the plans and sections of rural dwellings in Cameroon; Embola Oscar for material used in chapters One and two; Gwanfogbe Mathieu for figure 6; Jean-Felix Loung for plate 15; Presbook-Cameroon for plates 10 and 16; D.C. Money for figures 5, 26, 27, 28 and 29; Kadomura, H for figure 3; Dongmo J.L. for figure 23; Seignobos for figure 21; Yuh Euphrasia for 17; Geary and Hans Knopfli for 18; Graham Hollier for figures 32b and 32c; Jean Tissandier for figure 23; Guillard for figure 22; the British Broadcasting Corporation for figures 19, 20 and plate 14; International Women's Club of Yaounde for plates 4 and 6; Editions Jeune Afrique for plates 1, 12 and 13; Agriculture and Rural Development Journal of CTA, GTZ, DSE and DLG (Frankfurt am Main) for figures 30 and 31 and tables 2 and 3; Fadani for table 1; Neba Aaron for table 4; MINPAT – UNDP – Helvetas – Cameroon for table 5 and Agriculture and Rural Development Journal of CTA, DSE, GTZ, DLG (Frankfurt am Main) for the material used in chapters 5 and 6 which is based on their review of experiences in some African countries and other developing countries; F.S. Hudson for material used to realise chapters 2 and 3; Coen Reijntes, Bertus Haverkort and Ann Waters-Bayer for material on farming systems and the human setting.

Inspiration to undertake this book project also came from Professor Eze Bassey Eze of the University of Calabar (Nigeria), and Professor Lambi Cornelius of the University of Buea (Cameroon). I recognise their contribution. The school of education (ENS Bambili) at the University of Yaounde I remains a most stimulating and friendly place to work. Many of my colleagues and students there have taken interest and trouble in my work and I owe them a debt of thanks. Chapter 7 was realised thanks to the experiences of Dr. N. Porat who shared his experiences in Africa and Latin America with me during the International Workshop on Rural Physical Planning in Ruppin Institute – Israel. The rural settlement models presented in chapter 7 are also thanks to Dr. Porat (Architect). I equally owe him a debt of gratitude. Special thanks go to Professor J. L. Dongmo and Professor Gwan Emmanuel who introduced me to rural settlement geography at the University of Yaounde.

Lastly, the members of my family, Flo, Leslie, Hilda, Miriam, Kisito, Tim and Eli have put up with my mental and physical absences, and have always encouraged me in many different ways.

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Cameroon
2011

Preface

The second half of the twentieth century has seen the continuous transformation of the population in Africa into urban dwellers. However, rural areas still accommodate the majority of the population and will continue to do so well into this century. Africa is predominantly rural, and will remain so beyond the year 2020. Rural areas, rural development and the future of rural settlements need to be understood and addressed in the context of the ongoing democratisation trends and the emergence and development of civil society. Post-colonial history teaches us that the state succeeded in dominating civil society rather than serving it. By establishing a single cultural reference and imposing a centralised state, it exacerbated the fragmentation of civil society. Political pluralism has slowly been gaining ground since the 1990s.

In the age of globalisation, there is a visible trend towards decentralisation and regionalisation. This trend is leading to a new allocation of roles between the state, local district organisation and civil society. Such changed framework conditions are opening up new possibilities for regional and multi-disciplinary spatial planning in rural areas in which all sections of the population participate. Decentralisation is the transfer of decision-making powers to more directly concerned, lower levels of government and administrative authority. The primary justification is to bring government closer to the people in the interest of efficiency. The argument is that people become more aware of the cost of the services they use, and the administration can take better account of their wishes. Decentralisation has also been presented as being beneficial to the economy as a whole, chiefly by means of more equitable distribution of national resources and fiscal advantages such as easier collection of taxes. The reasons for drawing up and implementing decentralisation programmes are timeless. The book explores the scope for implementing decentralisation programmes that focus on the citizen in rural areas in terms of development priorities, civic participation and user participation. For the purpose of decentralisation, civic participation in local politics and user participation in development programmes must be seen as two sides of the coin.

The book focuses on spatial planning, that is, regional policy in the sense of planning as an on-going process in a political system. The process is concerned with spatial organisation in an integrative manner, and incorporates the design, establishment and implementation of a desired spatial structural organisation of the land. In many African countries, no such a planning role is played by the sovereign state, or it is exclusively economic

and administrative in character, without reference to space. The formulation of guidelines for spatial development at the overall level of a state is therefore inadequate, especially in states with extensive territory, and there are rarely suitable institutions to tackle this task.

This book develops a framework for spatial development planning with a focus on rural settlements. It emphasises the fact that the impact of political decentralisation on urban – rural relations in Cameroon like in many developing countries has not received much attention so far, and that priority attention has been paid to urban planning to the detriment of rural areas. Against this background the book attempts to tackle one question: how can decentralisation reach the rural population too, and how can this be translated into improvements in rural livelihoods through spatial development planning?

Professor Eze Bassey Eze
Department of Geography and Regional Planning
University of Calabar, Nigeria

This is an indispensable handbook for:

- *Students of Geography and land use planning,*
- *Rural development experts and Architects,*
- *Rural Planners and Settlement Geographers,*
- *Municipal managers and administrators involved with the decentralization process,*
- *Politicians involved with grassroots projects,*
- *Teachers of Settlement Geography at professional level,*
- *Agricultural and Natural Resource Managers*
- *Policy makers at central and local level government.*

Introduction

Rural refers to the countryside as opposed to the urban area. The rural population in popular use means the people living in the countryside as opposed to the people living in urban areas or towns. It can also imply the people living in an administrative unit of a certain defined size or population, according to the country. One can therefore talk of rural districts or rural councils. Many countries are increasingly shifting their efforts towards developing rural areas. In most developing countries, rural districts are depressed regions. There is an urgent need to relieve the situation in these depressed regions, to offset migratory pressure on urban centres and to accelerate the transition from subsistence agriculture to market-oriented agriculture. In most rural areas of the country the productivity of the land and the capacity to sustain a given population density in existing rural areas are hampered by the shortage of cultivable land, the lack of infrastructure such as irrigation, access roads, and other production factors. Figure 1 presents projections of available cultivable land in Cameroon between 1960 and 2025 based on assumptions of constant fertility and an average of 3 children per family. At constant fertility the available cultivable land shall be 0.4 hectares per person by 2025, while the latter assumption 0.8 hectares per person by 2025. The problem of access to key production resources such as land is exacerbated by traditional land tenure systems, poor land management, the fragmentation of farm holdings and over crowding in some regions. In addition, the dispersion and small size of rural communities restricts their ability to absorb and support basic modern amenities.

During the “Green Revolution” era (1960 to 1980), there was a growing realisation that the industrial and service sectors will be unable to generate sufficient employment in the foreseeable future. This combined with the need to reform obsolete agrarian systems led the government to open new lands for rural resettlement schemes and integrated rural development projects based on agriculture and the provision of basic support services. However, despite, the substantial financial investments these projects have not lived up to expectations. These have too often lapsed into stagnation in the face of an accentuating rural – urban dichotomy. The current agricultural policy is sectoral and focuses on specific cash crops. Agricultural extension under such a policy loses sight of the production objectives of the farm family, the basic foundation of indigenous farming systems and their influences on their socio-cultural environment.

In spite of outstanding investments by the government to modernise agriculture and to improve upon rural livelihoods, the majority of rural

communities are still far from achieving anything near their production potential. The most available resource in rural areas is labour. It is largely under-utilised due to inadequate availability of their production inputs. Rural development and extension services have brought substantial changes in rural areas, but have not yet produced a large-scale transformation of rural structures. The upgrading of traditional rural settlements in Cameroon is unable to keep pace with population growth in these depressed regions. The consequence is the deterioration in the economic conditions of rural people. Migration of rural people to urban areas is therefore faster than the modernisation of agriculture and rural structures. The rehabilitation of already settled agricultural land through large-scale resettlement schemes and land reform is tedious due to distorted physical patterns, fragmentation of farm holdings, cultural constraints, technological weaknesses, and the primary of village and kinship loyalties. The question, therefore, is how to modernise rural structures and the farm family holding. There is a need to search for new farming systems that guarantee productivity, continuity, security and identity to the peasant.

The inability to accelerate the modernisation of agriculture and rural structures will continue to increase the rural – urban dichotomy. The mounting problems related to urban and rural development are alarming. The economic crisis of the last two decades actually widened the gap between the poor and the middle class and between the urban and rural inhabitants. Many international organisations use an absolute of poverty, which is an income of one US Dollar per day per person. Even in developing countries, one US Dollar per day per person is barely enough for survival, let alone adequate food security. Cameroon is a country with a low Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI is a composite index of human development factors such as life expectancy; levels of education and income. It reconciles economic development with environmental protection. According to a UNDP Report (1993), about 40% and 20% of all households are categorised as being poor and poorest respectively. Thus a minimum of 60% of Cameroon households is poor. Between 1992 and 1993 the HDI fell from 0.471 to 0.313.

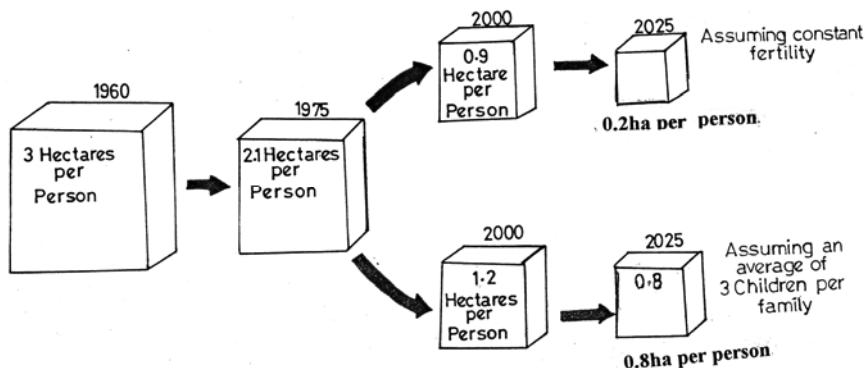


Figure 1: *Cameroon cultivable land area: 1960 – 2025*

The extent of poverty is spreading and now affects 70% of the rural population. The percentage of the rural population below the poverty line rose from 49% in 1983 to about 71% in 1993. Rural poverty continues to increase because producer prices for cash and food crops declined, resulting in up to 60% declines in rural incomes between 1983 and 1993 (Anon, 1998). Conditions of poverty in rural and urban areas are quite different just as they differ from one region to another. On the basis of social indicators such as housing, illiteracy and malnutrition the South and East Regions have the highest incidence of poverty, but the greatest numbers of poor people are concentrated in the densely populated arid and semi-arid regions (North and Far North Regions). The incidence of poverty tends to be lowest in the Littoral, West, North West and South West Regions. Agriculture currently accounts for more than 40% GDP, contributes 27% towards export earning and employs 68% of the national active labour force. Some 1.3 million farm-families comprising about 8 million rural dwellers mostly small holders, account for about 65% of the country's total population (Franz, 1997). Reacting to criticisms that structural adjustment programmes hurt the poor the World Bank in 1991 adopted an explicit strategy for poverty reduction. The bank opted for a combination of labour intensive growth and increased investment in human resources notably primary education and primary health, as its preferred approach to achieving poverty reduction. There was also a devaluation of the franc CFA in the mid 1990s.

The aim of devaluation is to raise the prices of goods traded on international markets, that is, imports and exports substitutes-relative to local products and services. The risk is that this price rises may spill over into local sectors, triggering a general inflationary spiral. To avoid that happening, devaluation must be accompanied by restrictive monetary and fiscal policies to check inflation. The better the balance maintained in relative price shifts between traded and non-traded goods sectors, the more effective devaluation will be. Table 1 examines the impact of devaluation on farms, households

and, by extension, agricultural production in Cameroon (Fadani: 1997 cited by Franz 1997). The table centres on the effect of pricing policy on exports and food production in Cameroon.

Table 1: Cameroon income and costs of a typical farm before and after devaluation

	Arabica coffee farms (increase in %)	Robusta coffee farms in (%)
Income		
➤ Coffee	109.6%	90.4%
➤ Food crops	15.8%	-4.8*
➤ Livestock production	18.3%	
<i>Total income</i>	<i>70.0%</i>	<i>70.3%</i>
Cost		
➤ Fertilisers	159.3%	117.8%
➤ Pesticides	130.8%	69.5%
➤ Others	8.5%	78.6%
➤ Total cost	67.4%	91.9%
<i>Net income</i>	<i>70.6%</i>	<i>59.9%</i>
Additional costs as a proportion of additional income	17.36%	22.30%

Source: Fadani (1997) cited by Franz (1997)

Surveys of farms and households in Cameroon showed that holdings with integrated export production (coffee, cocoa and cotton) or producing other tradable goods had benefited from devaluation. Although it drove up the prices of mineral fertilisers and pesticides, in the total budget these were equivalent to only 17% to 20% of the corresponding increase in income. Analysis of devaluation in Cameroon is complicated by the fact that world coffee and cocoa prices rose around the same time, and with liberalisation of the markets for these goods the price increases were passed on to growers. Table 1 shows the income and cost of typical farms pre and post devaluation.

The research findings discussed indicate that devaluation helped boost incomes in mixed cropping systems, with internationally traded and local product benefiting more than local food production. The specific effects of devaluation on internally traded and local products prompt a re-allocation of resources within farms and regions. The increased profitability of exports in Cameroon leads farmers to channel more labour and other inputs away from local foodstuffs into export crop goods. This causes shortages of local products and accordingly drives up prices – patterns particularly prevalent near urban centres. As a result, local food production becomes more profitable, offsetting the initial effects of devaluation. At the same time, in line with Von Thunen's theories, export production moves increasingly into

areas further away from urban markets. These processes are very much in evidence in Cameroon, where new coffee and cocoa plantations are generally some distance away from Yaounde and Douala (Franz, 1997).

The boundaries between the distribution of farm income between men and women have increased. It is evident that men, who are predominantly responsible for cocoa and coffee production, benefit more from devaluation than women, who farm mainly foodstuffs. At the same time, it should be noted that, with relative change in income, responsibilities also change; men take on a greater share of responsibility for food provision, school fees and health care. The implications of these shifts in income distribution and consequently the sharing of responsibilities for food provision and nutrition in rural households are hard to assess without further analysis, and call for thorough situation-specific investigations.

Structural adjustment has had less impact on growth, poverty, gender relations and transformation of society than was expected by the proponents and opponents. Many other factors have had greater influence on, for example; the situation in agriculture and the health of the poor. Aid projects and programmes that are unrelated to adjustment have affected the lives of Cameroonians and the capacity of institutions more both positively and negatively, than the structural adjustment programmes:

- Agriculture is central to Cameroon's development but it is stuck in a critical policy dilemma. The adjustment-related export focus has suffered from declining terms of trade. Adjustment has improved producer prices but at the same time removed the institutional basis that is, subsidised marketing boards and input delivery schemes for input based modernisation. Fertiliser prices have risen as a result of devaluation and the removal of subsidies. With increasing population pressure, intensification based on better integration of local methods and limited inputs (Lower external input sustainable agriculture) would be the only way forward, but this will imply a major re-organisation of extension and research, which has not been included in structural adjustment programmes.
- Signs of a widened gap in income opportunities between urban and rural households have emerged to the benefit of the former. This goes against expectation and the original intention to increase the production of tradable goods by rural households to improve the lot of the rural poor. The reason is partly that the growth associated with increased aid flows (in the wake of agreements on adjustments) and trade liberalisation has benefited urban areas most (Paul Engberg-Pedersen and Lars, 1997). Another reason is that fewer people than expected have been laid off in the civil service and in public and private enterprise. At the same time, there are trends towards greater inequality within rural areas between

those with assets and easy access to inputs, credit markets and those without, particularly in remote areas.

- Progress on poverty reduction has been limited by slow growth; and in part because of the financial burden caused by the restoration of macro-economic equilibrium, the improvement of relations with external creditors; which has put a serious strain on public resources and weak institutional capacity and inadequate delivery systems for core infrastructure and social services. Unemployment and underemployment are high. At present Cameroon is self sufficient in feeding itself from its own resources; the supply of food to the population is considered as satisfactory.
- Nevertheless, malnutrition in children in certain parts of the country, particularly during the period just before the harvest season, is an increasingly serious problem for health policy. Not poverty itself, but consumer preference is often the cause of malnutrition in children. Considerable efforts have been made to reduce poverty, these measures include:
 - o Infrastructural measures – mostly financed by international co-operation partners are showing clear results. Considerable improvements have been achieved even though the high population growth conceals this progress in terms of figures. Investment and development policy measures are in a constant race against the growth in population. The supply of drinking water, rural electrification and primary health services are positive examples, but a lot still has to be done.
 - o Results are also apparent in the educational sector where rural primary schools and secondary schools have increased in each basic administrative unit (Sub Division). Free education at primary school level is a reality and will certainly increase primary school enrolment.

Although there are deficiencies in the satisfaction of basic needs and also in the assuring of food security for the population, Cameroon is not a classic “hunger-ridden country”. Present resources are adequate to meet supply, only some rice and wheat flour are imported. Nevertheless, the existing situation is still relevant. But the economic and sector policies are hardly oriented to the needs of the poorest sections of the population at the present time. The political decision making process on the use of the often-meagre budget resources lacks the necessary focus. The markedly hierarchical organisation of government institutions is joined by insufficient capacity in utilising poverty-oriented tools for planning and impact monitoring. At

regional and divisional levels structural deficiencies in the institutional sphere are increasing:

- The lack of functional self-governing structures;
- Inadequate inclusion of the private and the informal sectors leads to administrative bottlenecks in many rural areas.
- Planning criteria do not consider the need to elaborate comprehensive development schemes that reduce the rural – urban dichotomy.

The very core or centre – periphery relationship between town and countryside may be the key factor in rural retardation in Cameroon. Rural depopulation by the main regional towns and the two main metropolises (Douala and Yaounde) is alarming. The same relationship is duplicated in the periphery of the small rural towns, the latter, instead of generating growth by offering basic facilities for distribution and supply, lives mainly by extracting the dismal wealth produced by a servile rural population (Maos, 1984). The effective development of a rural region may require a systematic substitution of the traditional hierarchy of central places by an adequately balanced structure based on reciprocal economic and civic interests. According to Maos (1984), the rural population has to be organised in viable communities in order to become amenable to economic and cultural integration. The communities must likewise be spatially organised in an optimal way, making it possible to provide amenities and to direct their production for the purpose of achieving economic status.

Generic Spatial Development of Rural Areas

Ambiguities can hardly be avoided when it comes to a thorny issue as “land settlement”. Throughout the literature such terms as “land reform”, “land settlement” or resettlement, with prefixes such as rural, agrarian and land are used indiscriminately. Related terms such as spatial organisation and rural, physical or regional planning, usually refer to the same field. Some definitions perceive land settlement as the planned and controlled transfer of population from one area to another for the purpose of raising living standards; as projects involving planned social change that entail population selection, population resettlement and, subsequently population control, or as the permanent settlement of nomadic or foraging populations and the centralisation of cultivators (Apthorpe, 1966). The description testifies to the breadth of the subject.

Maos (1984) defines land settlement as an organised attempt to establish people on the land in a relatively permanent manner. It is part of and complementary to rural development because of its diverse effects on the traditional rural structure, both at the individual and institutional levels. Settlement on new land provides the opportunity to:

design the farming system, administrative and socio-economic atmosphere in which the settlement can operate; incorporate functional devices for production services and amenities; avoid certain adaptation problems that usually result from a change in status and which often generate social rifts and frictions; create administrative and planning capacity without getting entangled in the additional complexities of traditional settlement; increase production through added hectareage; open new land in remote and isolated parts of the country for settlement to landless peasants and future population that cannot expect employment in other sectors; relieve pressure on overpopulated, depressed rural areas, and attract migration away from the large urban centres; tap new land resources and develop infrastructure that will generate linkages to other sectors; and achieve a more balanced population distribution in the country by creating and reinforcing rural growth poles.

Cameroon possesses extensive reserves of national land in isolated and enclaved regions in both the forest and savannah eco-climatic zones. In the Sudan-Sahel region the opening up of idle land for land settlement is limited at present to irrigable areas. Opening up new land for land settlement may be necessary both to meet longer-term food needs and to alleviate social inequalities (Addeke, 1973).

The land settlement option for rural development is surely going to face some constraints. The apparently considerable expanses of land available for settlement are too entirely vacant and some areas already contain age-old tribal groups. Figure 2 presents the major ethnic groups and some tribal groupings in Cameroon. There has been a tendency towards sedentarisation by the pastoral tribes (Fulbe) and the foraging tribes (Baka or pygmies). Some vacant forest and savannah regions in the western parts of the country are already facing spontaneous resettlement from the high density highlands and other overpopulated tribes (Bamileke, Tikars and Widikum). The new settlement nuclei have attracted little development assistance. Such pioneer colonisation may result in economic and social waste and may interfere with the orderly planning of land use. This will be similar to introducing new settlement and farming systems in a densely or sparsely settled tribal chiefdom where dwellings and farm holdings cling to ancestral traditions and socio-cultural norms.

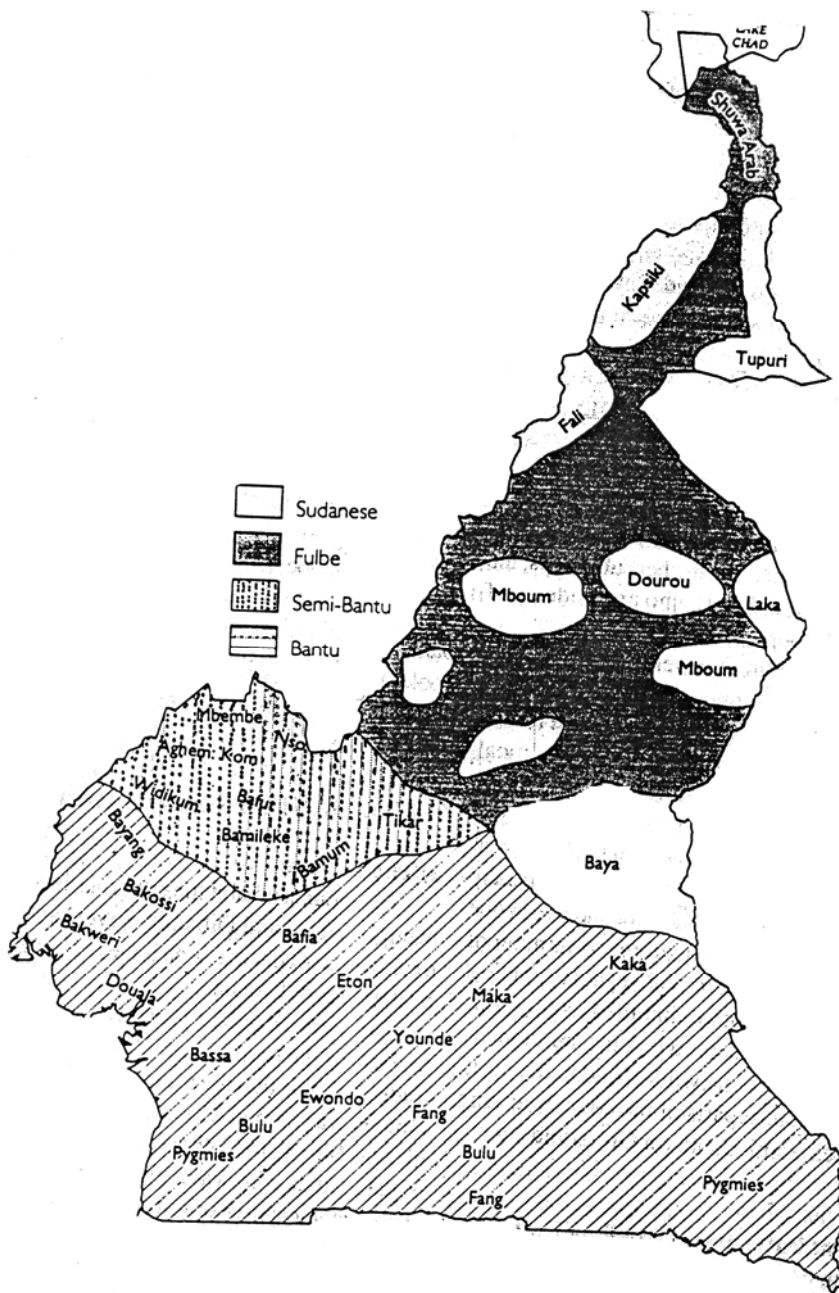


Figure 2: Major ethnic groups and some tribal groupings in Cameroon

Can the opening of new lands through the construction of penetration roads and other infrastructure be beneficial? The government has created regional development authorities that are charged with this development strategy. These have so far failed to alleviate poverty and to reduce the rural – urban dichotomy due to poor management, no motivation of settlers by agricultural extension services, inadequate supervision of funds and a poor welfare component. Land settlement schemes along modern lines are undoubtedly an abrupt departure from the way of life of farmers. Settlers will be required to adjust to new circumstances which are often difficult. Should we therefore, permit the spatial abuse of new lands by uncontrolled village agglomerations or excessive dispersion? How can the planning of rural facilities and efficient production, spatial organisation of the farm family, the village and inter-village group accommodate the spatial inter-relationships between man, the social and physical environment and technical resources?

A genuine need exists for the development of a spatial criteria which can be adapted, with necessary adjustments, to a wide range of situations and localities. The question then arises: is it possible to speak of land settlement in Cameroon in a generic way? The ethnic and ecological diversity of the country (Figure 3) certainly cannot accept land settlement along modern lines. Rural communities everywhere contain distinct features and idiosyncrasies (Maos, 1984). Factors such as topography, climate, political structure and dwelling patterns are so divergent that any non categorised treatment runs the risk of being highly unscientific. Nevertheless, generic development areas can be identified. This is deemed legitimate for several reasons. First, although marked differences exist between regions, these are often variations in similar themes: ancestral plots, social structures, religion, traditional institutions and farm structure. The common denominator is that the rural households react to basic problems of land, employment, amenities, market forces, religion and other forces in a similar way. The climatic rhythm and lifestyle of the peasant cuts across ethnic boundaries. Given the financial constraints, lack of expertise, and the traumatic experiences peasants undergo in new land settlements, we can conclude that except for few resettlement projects, the participation in new land settlement is mostly voluntary.

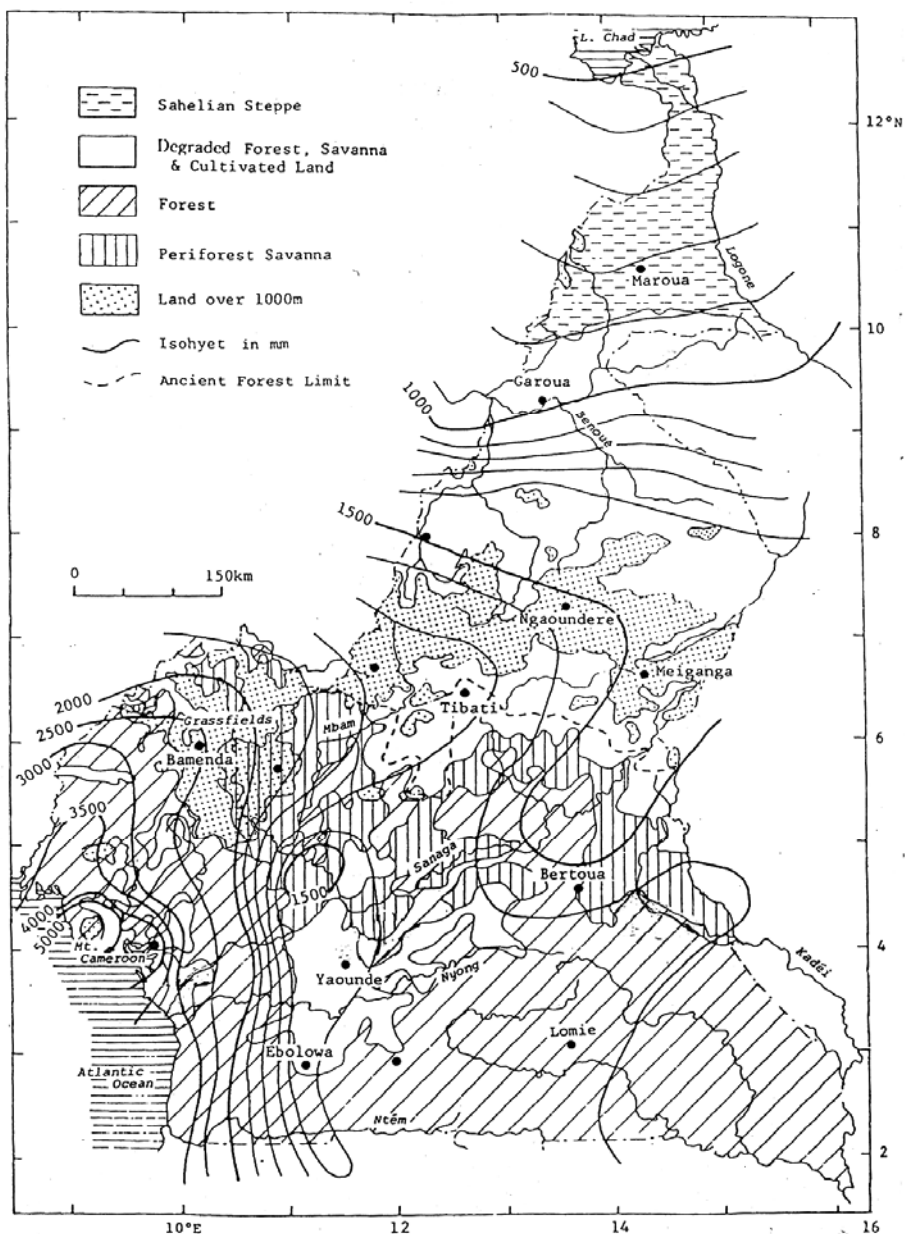


Figure 3: Mean annual rainfall and major vegetation zones of Cameroon (Kadomura, 1984;; Letouzey, 1979)

The concept of generic development area is formulated in this study primarily with respect to the human and social dimensions; the peasant's perception of the dwelling (homestead), the village and its institutions, and the farm system (See Figure 4 and Figure 5). The guiding principle is that, while rural development programmes must be technically feasible and adequately endowed, the crucial factor for success lies in the human element. In the country, each village (chiefdoms) vies for the provision of basic infrastructure, amelioration of income generating activities and livelihoods. These villages are organised in rural districts or councils. Decentralisation processes are underway in the country. This process can provide opportunities for a new approach towards rural development and poverty alleviation. Can development agencies and the government transfer resources and authority from central government to local bodies through rural – urban linkages (levels of municipalities) to promote rural development and poverty alleviation? Can local government support rural development through the generation of funds for planning and financing rural infrastructure and services as part of agricultural modernisation and empowerment of rural people?

Regional planning theories are invariably based on economic activities and the development of natural resources. Human resources, especially in rural areas, are sometimes overlooked while planners concentrate on economic aspects (Resources For The Future, 1966). The importance of the human factor as a chief moving force can be proven by the many regions which have enjoyed economic growth in spite of the lack of natural resources or particular comparative advantages (Maos, 1984). Regional development needs to be conceived as being for the benefit of people who live and settle in the region. Rural habitat development should be approached in terms of the human potential inherent in rural areas and agriculture regarded as the main resource and tool for socio-economic transformation. Two goals are associated with the development of the agricultural component. Those designed to develop agriculture as a stable and viable enterprise, and those aiming to improve both the economic and social structure of the rural area by integrating all sections of the population into a system of production relationships based on rising skills and equal opportunities. Spatial organisation as the second goal aims at the simultaneous development of the human being and natural resources. The socio-economic advancement of the rural population is seen as a precondition for the absorption of health and education and the general enhancement in the well being of the rural poor.

The conceptual framework involving the development of family farms involves three interdependent elements:

The human element is the basic planning subject rather than the economic sector or activity. This includes: the family and its farm system, the community of small farmers, a framework for social and economic interaction, and the region of associated rural settlements (rural districts); Promoting the **process** of transition from subsistence farming to market – oriented farming; and providing the **means** and infrastructure involved in the development and transformation process (physical, human, and institutional infrastructure).

The institutional bodies implicated in rural development are: the government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local and regional development organisations or authorities. Governmental entities contribute mainly to the development of the physical infrastructure, macro-planning and control, relating regional developmental activities to other government programmes. The task of detailed planning and establishment of local institutions in the time of decentralisation may well lie with the local government in rural districts. Rural councils and related government technical services can be upgraded to possess a managerial capacity that can act as catalyst in the organisation of local socio-economic enterprises.

The role of government, the public, NGOs and civil society, local institutions, as well as that of private organisations, and the scope of the relationships involved in rural development have been reviewed extensively. However, the consequential process of development from the beginnings of the family farm, the rural habitat, the rural district, rural-urban linkages and dependencies to rural regional co-operation has not yet been sufficiently explored. The leading arguments in this book focus on these inadequacies, and decentralisation as a new scope for regional rural development. Figure 4a and Figure 4b present a breakdown of traditional architectural styles in Cameroon. The scientific – technical base of the architecture depends on the natural sciences, the farming system and the conditions of human life. The book therefore also emphasises rural habitat development, and the numerous interacting factors between the habitat, farm family, farming system, the evolution of settlements and the need for participative decentralised decision-making on rural community development issues.

A village or community is an agglomeration of hamlets in a geographic space. The hamlet and the settlement as a whole and its functions and relationships constitute the rural area. Figure 4a and Figure 4b present the distribution of homesteads in Cameroon per geographic space, tribe, the cross-section and building materials used. The development of rural areas must emphasise the human element, promote a transition to better living standards, and provide the means to empower rural people participate and promote their own development.

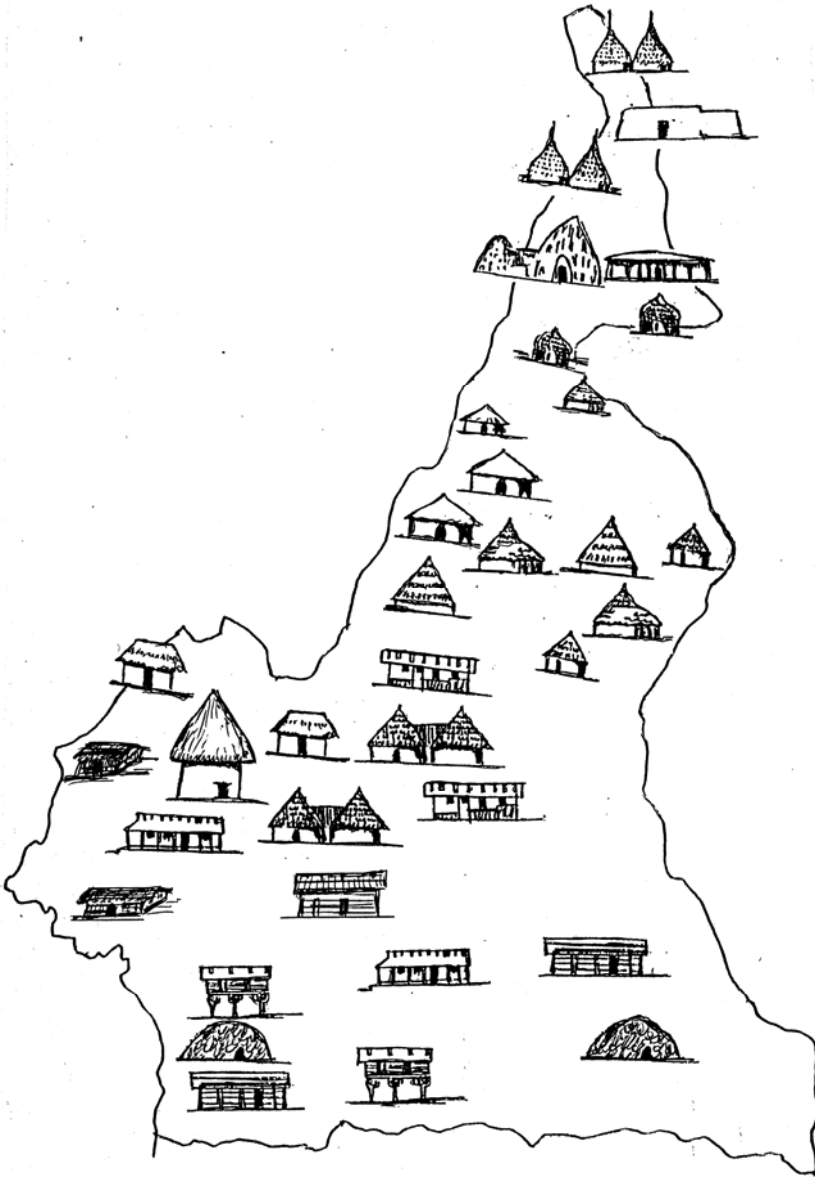


Figure 4a: Distribution of forms of rural dwellings in Cameroon

Sets of buildings		Standard plans	Standard frontages	Materials
1	Kokolo and Arabics			earth and wood
2	Montain Matakam Mofu Kapski Mamdri Mousgoum			earth, stone and millet
3	Massa and Tonpouri			earth
4	Moudang			earth, millet
5	Dourou			earth, wood, millet
6	Mboum			earth, wood, millet
7	Foulbe			earth, wood, millet
8				
9	Tikar			earth, wood, thatch
10	Bamoum			earth, wood, thatch
11	Bamileke			earth, bamboo, thatch
12	Baya			earth, wood, thatch
13	Savana			earth, wood matting, thatch
14	Forest			earth, wood matting, bamboo
15	Pygmy			wood, leaves
				wood, leaves

Figure 4b: Standard plans and building materials used for rural dwellings

Objectives of the Rural Physical Planner

Development planning of rural areas can only be accomplished by an interdisciplinary team co-operating to fuse their individual expertise into an optimum rural settlement plan. This book is directed at rural land use planners, regional planners, rural architects and land resource managers who may be members of the multi-disciplinary team. The responsibility of the team is to prepare the integrated concept of the rural settlement plan and bring it into operation. The minimum team should include a physical planner,

a land use planner or geographer, a rural planning architect, a hydrologist, agronomist, sociologist, civil engineer, mechanical engineer and electrical engineer. The physical planner is normally the team leader as he will control the operation of the project from the beginning to the end. The main objectives of physical planning are to:

- minimise distance to the farm and to the village service centre;
- minimise capital for basic village infrastructure;
- maximise land and crop enterprises in the village;
- maximise the initiatives of the farm family, that is, the involvement of men, women and children;
- create a viable farm unit, that is, maximise farm yard efficiency (viable farm size);
- maximise flexibility for future changes in village land use in terms of farm plans, settlement plans and the provision of basic socio-economic infrastructure;
- guarantee equity of access to key production resources (land and water), basic socio-economic infrastructure and the village service centres; and
- integrate the village into hierarchical network of settlements with rural – urban linkages and interdependencies. This should closely conform to the structures of devolution of democratic and participative decision-making from the centre down to the grassroots.

Rural Habitat Planning and the Role of Decentralization

A rural settlement is usually called a village. It may be a simple house. This single house is called a dispersed settlement. It may be a group of houses which are clustered together. In this case it is called a nucleated settlement. It may consist of a line of houses along a road, river, the edge of a swamp, etc. In this case it is called a linear or elongated settlement. The site of settlement is related to one or more of the following: availability of water, availability of suitable land on which to build, availability of suitable building materials, availability of suitable soils for farming, availability of natural features on the site such as escarpments, hills, river meander to give protection from flood or attack, and availability of communication route ways.

Nucleated and dispersed settlements occur throughout Cameroon. Most villages consist of a group of compounds with each compound containing a number of huts. In the savanna eco-climate villages are sited and built to provide the maximum defence. From the 16th to 19th centuries, slave traders operated in these areas. Villages in the West, North, West, Adamawa, North and Far North Regions were built on escarpments. Others among boulders around inselberg so that they could not be easily seen (Kapsiki and Mandara).

In the dry savannas the availability of water and defence were the main factors which influenced the sitting of villages. Some are located near to streams or to wells. The latter were often at the foot of an inselberg which provided a good defensive site. Such examples are found in the Diamare Plain of the Far North Region.

Nucleated settlements occur in the Southern part of the country. These are found especially on interfluves between rivers or streams where soils are fertile and well drained, and generally free of tsetse fly. In addition, interfluve site are some distance from the rivers and this gave protection from the slave traders. The villages in plateaux areas are generally dispersed such as in the North West and West Regions. These are dispersed but nucleated.

Settlements in most of the forest belt are nucleated. The villages are built in forest clearings and are joined together by forest tracks or rivers and roads. The construction of communication route ways has resulted in the development of elongated or linear villages along them. Many villages are located along roads with houses fronting the roads and house plots at right angles to the roads. Gardens lie behind the houses and beyond the garden the farmland. In dispersed settlements, the life of the people is simple and quiet. There is little opportunity for social gatherings. Dispersal of settlement tends to render the development and administration of these areas difficult.

Agro-villages or plantation camps are found in the forested belt. In the forested regions of South Cameroon where plantation agriculture for rubber, oil palm, banana and tea exist, dormitory villages or camps have been set up for workers and their families. Workers live in nucleated villages within large plantations or estates. Plantation villages are planned and have basic socio-economic infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and health centres, canteens, community halls and shops amongst others.

Several houses or hamlets make up a ward, or a quarter. Several wards make up a village. A community of villages constitutes a district or sub-division. Several sub-divisions make up a division, and several divisions constitute a region. These were the levels of authority before decentralization and regionalization. The felt change today is the conversion of Provinces into Regions. The growing debate on decentralization does not, however, mean that all the key players are already convinced that decentralization would necessarily have a positive effect on the development of Cameroon's rural areas. Nor is there yet any consensus whatsoever as to what would constitute a successful decentralization strategy. Opinions diverge largely even within individual ministries, political parties, civil society, international partners and central government. The same is true of local government in regions and districts.

Discussions continue to be generally dominated by matters of constitutional reform and administrative procedure. Although

decentralization is always presented as a way of achieving increased regional economic growth and improved living standards, no development strategy has been formulated to secure those goals by means of practical decentralization policies. Instead the focus is on the transfer of state responsibilities and resources to various levels of government and establishing efficient structures for regional and local administration in disregard of the welfare and democratic voice and participation of civic society. This issue here is the need for district autonomy in the decentralization process. What are the necessary changes in the organizational structure and content of decentralization that can benefit a household or farm family, ward, village, and the district?

Rural regions continue to be characterized by low incomes, over specialization in a few commodities, environmental deterioration and chronic out-migration. Migrant and external elite remittances from all over the country's metropolitan areas and cities are increasingly becoming the principal sources of rural household incomes. How can decentralization and associated rural habitat-spatial development planning improve rural livelihoods? These questions and many others are examined in the next chapters. The debate on decentralization and rural spatial development planning is a learning process for many developing countries. The debates in this book necessitate the institution of district autonomy pilot programmes based on simple but radical principles.

The Complexity of Human Settlement

Any systematic study of human settlement must be daunting, and for many reasons. Cameroon is often referred to as “Africa in miniature”. The country has over 200 tribes or has people who are diverse in race, social habits and economic assets. There are great differences between the mode of life of millions of peasant peoples caught in a seemingly inescapable rural poverty. The factors affecting their particular clusters of population, their forms of settlement, intercommunications, and modes of living are many and complex in a country of great social, tribal and biogeographic diversity. This chapter makes a geographical assessment of the most crucial factors affecting the form, structure and the development of the rural habitat. The interaction of these factors is complex and therefore chapters two and three seek to assess them and to establish their relative importance.

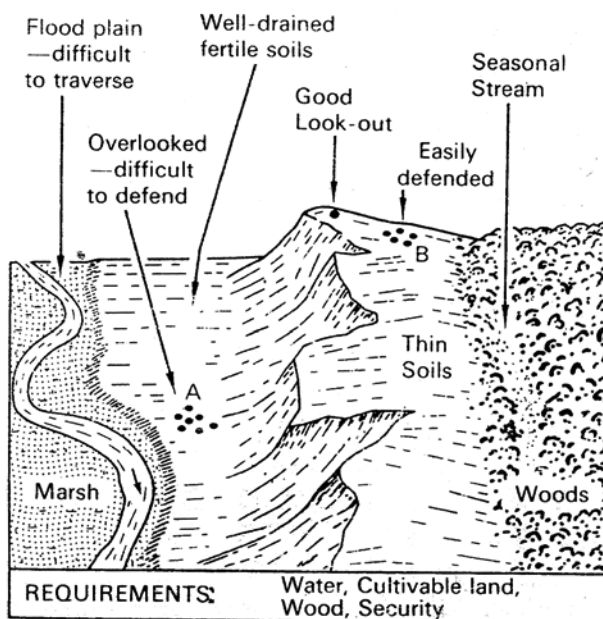


Figure 5: Human choice of settlement site- conflicting site factors that influence decisions

Figure 5 presents the main considerations for the choice of village settlement site and the sitting of the habitat. The making of a choice often faces conflicting factors. The main requirements for the habitat are water, cultivable land, fuelwood, construction materials and security. As shown in

Figure 5, settlement can be at A, near water and cultivable land, but it is insecure. B is easier to defend, closer to forest – though firewood gathering is a periodic occupation. Perennial water is distant. Lowland soils could be cultivated and abandoned in time of trouble. Which combination of factors will most strongly influence a decision?

As the various tribes moved about, choosing places to occupy, cultivate and inhabit in small or large communities, they have been subject to innumerable pressures and influences. As thinking beings, able to consider alternatives, they have been moved to seek territory which could provide their various needs – available water, a dry site for habitation, land with fertile soils and easy to clear, and a supply of wood. They had hoped to enjoy such assets free from competition from neighbouring tribal groups. When alternative sites were available for occupation, many whose first choice proved unsuitable must have moved on to clear and settle other land (Money, 1975). In some cases, a particular advantage would seem to outweigh others, perhaps nearness to water or the need to occupy a defensive site, but often a combination of advantageous factors would be weighed together, consciously or unconsciously and new settlement made accordingly.

The occupied landscapes in Cameroon bear recognisable patterns of settlement and forms of dwellings; patterns which vary with the topography, biogeography, and with custom and technological abilities of the people themselves. Of course, increasing pressure of population, or economic circumstances, may cause changes in these patterns. Nevertheless we frequently recognise spatial regularities in the forms of dwellings, either as relics of the past or as responses to present conditions. The modernisation of these dwellings is an important step in improving upon the lives of rural people and in maintaining a cultural identity and promoting indigenous architecture.

The Variety of Individual Dwellings

A variety of rural dwellings can be observed across the country as one moves from the rainforest in the south to the steppe savannah region in the north. This diversity conforms to biogeographic, climatic and socio-cultural circumstances of the various localities. The various forms of dwellings are also related to historical circumstances and the evolution of agrarian, technological and socio-political systems of the people. Just as languages and customs change from one part of the country to another, so does the traditional appearance of houses and other structures and the way in which they are grouped together.

The cultural identity of the peasants presents itself as a group of manufactured objects, institutions, forms of organisation, beliefs and works

of art. At the origin of this identity are the practical and theoretical efforts of man to satisfy every day basic needs and aspirations. These include activities of simple survival and those of accomplishment. Survival activities enable the farm family to feed itself, find shelter, protect itself from bad weather, ensure collective safety, procreate and have a minimum amount of organisation concerning all the activities of the village chiefdom. The form of houses, symbols and rites are often intimately linked to these activities and these ensure collective survival of the village chiefdom. The physical and the socio-cultural environments, therefore, come under the spell of the people's aesthetic development.

The techniques of a people are in general instruments for adaptation to the environment and survival in the physical environment combines utility and aesthetics (Towa, 1985). Towa in defining the concept of cultural identity, says that it embodies firstly, identity, and the term identity is not traditionally linked to culture. All communities exalt their culture which presents itself as taste, aptitude, knowledge, know-how, beliefs, opinions, assumed and lived attitudes. Culture in this sense is literally a mode of existence of the people. The cultural landscape in Cameroon is one of diversity: of standards of living, knowledge and know-how and habitats. Cultural identity for the rural household will therefore mean the people's or individual's standard of living, social status or social structure, ideas, competence, values and options.

The culture of the people therefore influences the native architecture or traditional dwellings. This involves the design of houses in various biophysical environments taking into consideration the inherent needs and basic requirements of man to inhabit and to build shelter – using local materials available in the locality and in conformity with their survival and accomplishment activities. The appearance, both external and internal, of a single dwelling is clearly the result of a particular shape, size or form, function and the structural materials used in erecting its roof and walls. Each of these factors may be examined in both a regional and in an historical and cultural context: obviously a formidable task. Because of the complexity of the undertaking, this chapter shall in the main limit itself to a consideration of the traditional rural dwelling. The question here is, how native architecture can be promoted in the face of technological development in order to increase the living standards of peasants and at the same time maintaining the cultural identity of the Village Chiefdom.

The Village and Habitat

A village is closely related to its immediate surroundings. The majority of inhabitants are involved in agricultural activities. Very few villages in the country are shown on atlas maps of Cameroon. Nevertheless, the number of

villages and the role they play in the social and economic life should not be undermined. Government policy has tended to emphasise urban settlement planning to the neglect of rural settlement planning and development despite the fact that urban residents in Cameroon represent slightly over 40% of the total population. Urbanisation in the country is alarming and this is due to the economic neglect of rural areas. Rural – urban exodus continues to adversely affect the village as a socio-economic unit within a monetary economy. There is need to improve upon rural – urban linkages that will sustain the village in its cultural and physical environment while ensuring a reasonable standard of living for farm family households. Our policy should not be to urbanise all villages. Towns have been described as “villages which succeeded”. If we allow this to happen without seeking ways of integrating native architecture into modern architecture for both rural and urban communities, then Cameroon would have lost an important cultural and technological heritage and identity. This will not be a loss for Cameroon alone, but for humanity as a whole

Villages in the country are diversified by their granaries and ban of tubers. They support, besides peasant farmers, craftsmen, institutions and cultures that are important for eco-cultural tourism. They possess a wealth of indigenous knowledge embedded in their cultures, religion and farm systems that can be tested, validated and extended for the benefit of humanity. All these can be stimulated by government.

Village life can be sustained only when sedentary agriculture bringing a more assured reward from the land, is adopted. Only then can the efficiency of the village habitat be enhanced using modern architecture and technologies. There is need to adopt a policy that will plan villages. This will require that village chiefdoms be deliberately designed or adjusted to conform to native architectural styles or forms and farming systems. Rural councils in partnership with related state departments face this challenge. This should go side by side with the development of rural services and infrastructure. The establishment of mission stations, with churches, schools and clinics, has already introduced a new village form to which many rural artisans and small shopkeepers have been attracted to create service centres. In some cases, service centres have recently arisen round the headquarters of the district administration, round some railway stations, road junctions or terminus. Such centres eventually grow into semi-urban centres with an eroded cultural heritage by the adoption of western architecture and lifestyles. In a rapidly changing socio-economic and technological environment native architecture is rapidly disappearing despite its scientific knowledge, materials and methods. It has great potential to be improved and to complement modern architecture for a truly Cameroonian cultural identity.

Architectural Styles and Building Forms

How far are dwellings the product of their environment, physical and social; how far a product of man's artistic sense and technical ability? Is there not the scope for man as an artist who is constantly striving to express himself in new terms to enhance the quality of the traditional dwelling with changing circumstances? The multiplicity of native architectural styles can make a significant contribution to the architectural sector and to the cultural identity of our rural and urban landscapes. The following descriptions of native architectural styles are based on sketches by Mendunga (1985) and translations by Embola (1999):

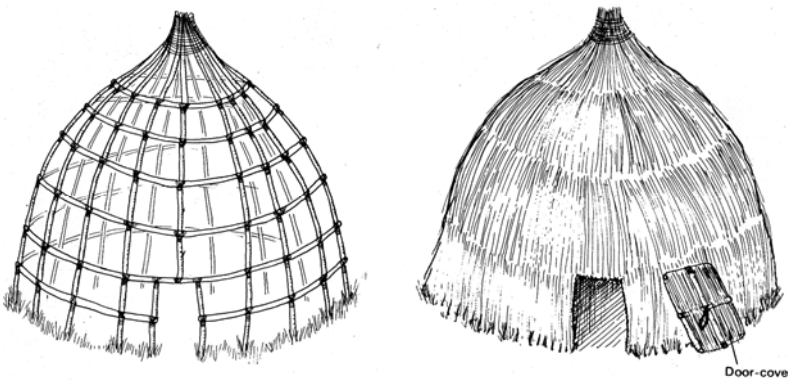


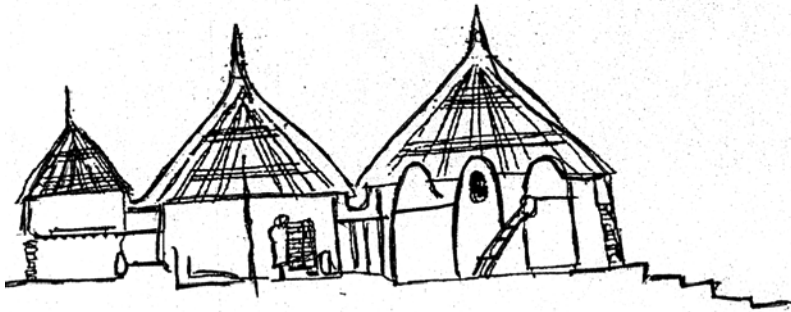
Figure 6: Mbororo- Fulani architecture in the Bamenda Plateau

The Mountain Dwellers

The Fulani, a pastoral cattle-rearing people probably of north African origin inhabit the greater part of the extreme north of the country and to a lesser extent parts of Bamenda grassland, Adamawa, Bamum and Lom. Their houses are of a temporary nature and are of the simplest construction. They consist of branches of trees struck in the ground in a circle and bent inwards to join at the top, the spaces in-between the branches being fitted with grass. The doors which are often made low and narrow keep out cattle and rain, have a covering or shutter of a similar framework of small tree branches with grass filling in spaces (See Fig. 6).

In this same region, the Mafa use stones to build round walls, the Fulani use clay while the Guiziga use woven straw. The Kotokos build clay houses with more than one floor and flat roofs. Wood is used for reinforcements of both the roofs and walls. No straw or thatch is used. The Kapsiki inhabit the valleys of cultivated and terraced hill sides. The most common type found is the conical top roofed with millet straw (see Fig. 7). For the mountain Matakan, they resemble those of the Tikar but the former have a more

projected conical top constructed with millet straw. Wood is a rarity in their locality therefore they make use of the abundant stone and use earth as mortar.



Section A B

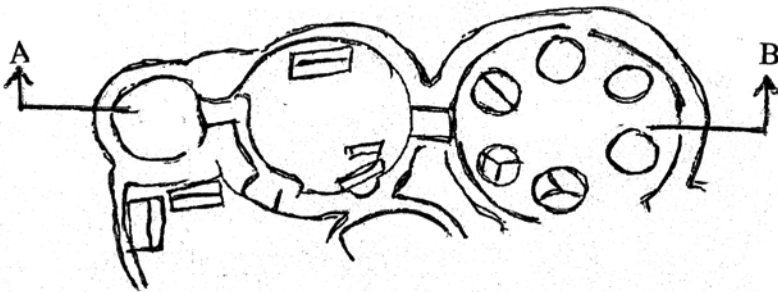


Figure 7: Kapsiki valley rural dwelling

Northern Savannah Plains

These comprise those of Mousgoum, Massa and Tonpouri, Moundang, Dourou, Mbum, Fulbe and parts of region inhabited by Tikaris. House types vary with the region. The Mousgoum architecture in the plains is certainly the most famous and impressive of all types of Cameroonian traditional architectures. They lacked wood and stone in their environment. It is classed among the best architecture in the world. The structure consists of round earth huts, comprising a structure built in the form of an eggshell. They use shells for the walls and clay for the roofs. It also contains circular cones, fluted to form vertical grooves. The latter act as buttresses and allow rainwater to drain off. These huts have no reinforcement and no foundation, merely a self-bearing shell (see Fig. 8).

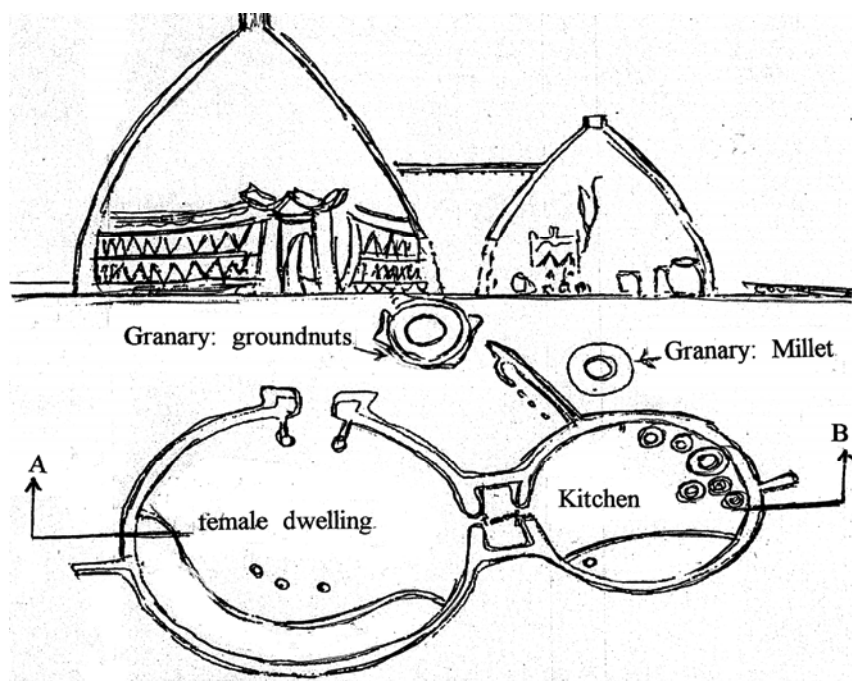


Figure 8: Lowland architecture – Rural dwelling in Mousgoum country

The Massa architecture makes use of wood, clay and straw and shares some of the characteristics with the Mousgoum architecture. The diameter of these round huts vary from three to four metres and usually have a door which is the only opening. Mendunga notes that “the walls are built with lumps of earth and are rounded from the inside. When a ring has been completed, it is left to dry in the sun. This process is repeated until the required height of the hut has been attained”. The roof is first constructed on the ground before being assembled on the top of the wall of the future hut. The roof resembles a large inverted basket (see Fig. 9).

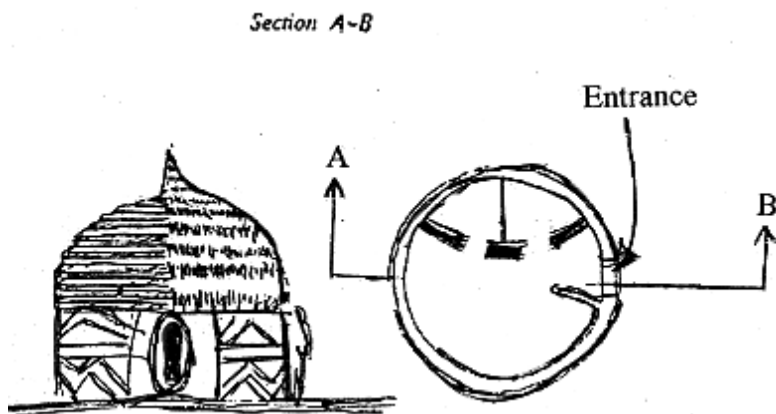


Figure 9: Massa style architecture in the plains of North Cameroon

The Moundang architecture is distinguished by the shape of the lofts. Large families live within clay walls known as “Sare”. Grain mills are built very close to these settlements (See Fig. 10a and Fig. 10b). The Dourou, Mboum and Fulbe architecture are round huts constructed with earth, wood and millet. In most parts of Tikar area, two-round huts are connected by a trapezium thatched roof with walls constructed with earth and wood. (See Fig. 11)

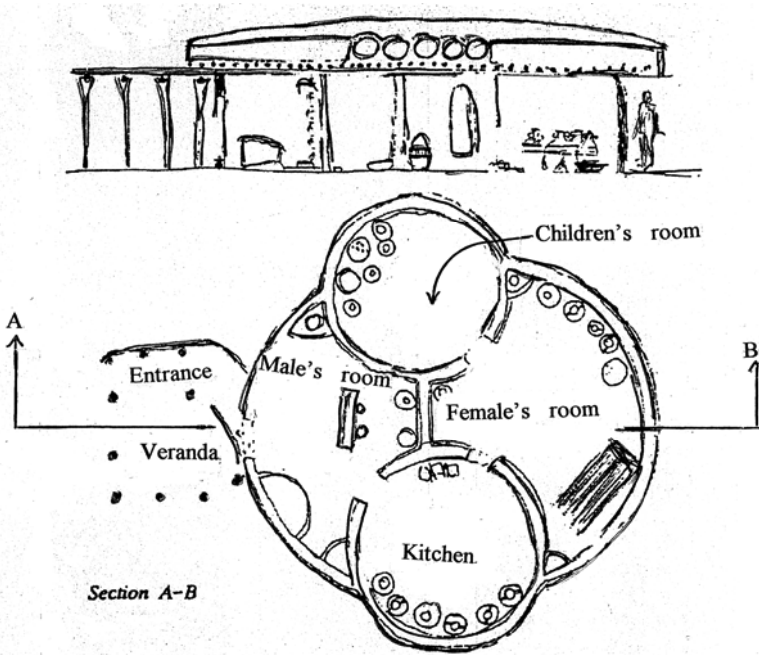


Figure 10a: Section of the Moundang architecture in plain topography

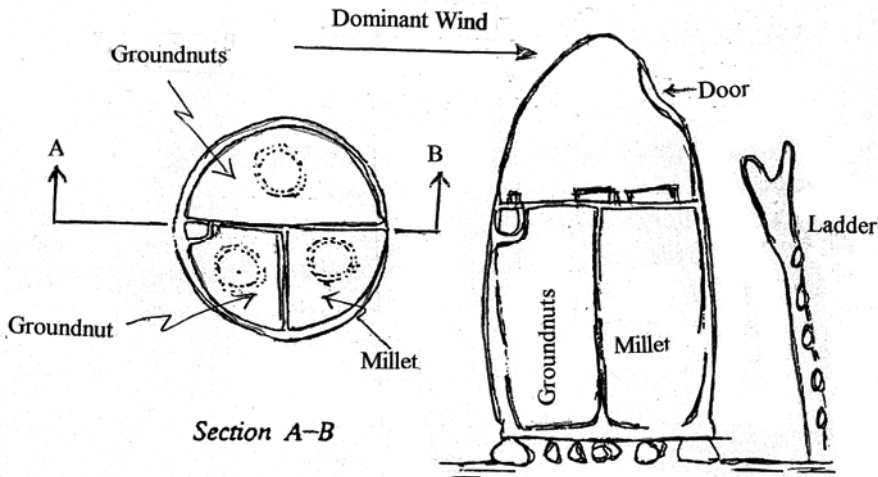


Figure 10b: Section of the Moundang architecture in the plains of North Cameroon

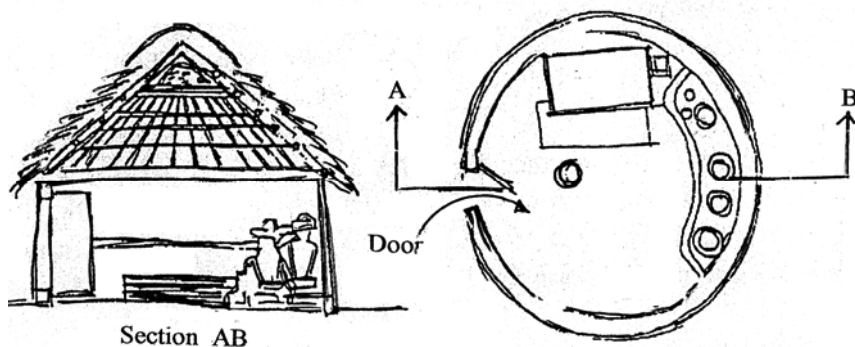


Figure 11: Section of the Fulbe dwelling in a plain landscape

The high savannah plateaux region

Major architectural types of this region are those of the Bamileke, Bamum, Baya, Bangwa and the Tikar. Mendunga writes that “architectural styles of the Bamum and Bamileke are particularly noteworthy because these live in a kind of osmosis, both spatial and cultural”. This is also why they share similar characteristics (See Figs. 12 and 13).

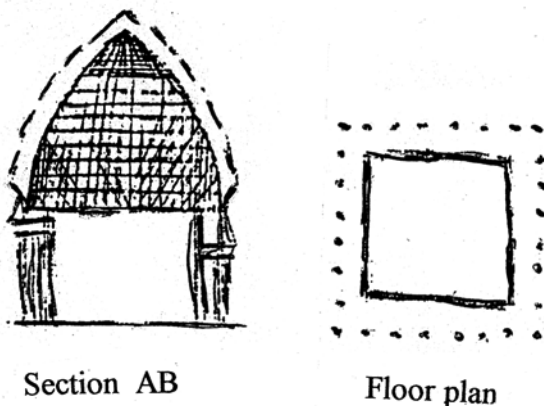


Figure 12: Section of a Bamoun dwelling

This region is found among the central high lands and in particular the central plateau region. Where forest exists, house styles are mostly low rectangular huts roofed with palm thatch. In Bamenda and the Eastern Grassfields houses are tall, square with pyramidal grass thatched roofs.

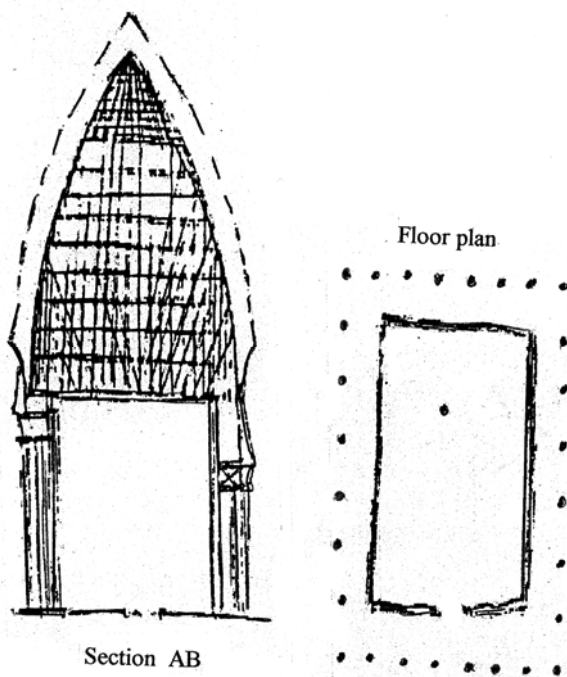


Figure 13: Section of a Bamileke dwelling in a plateau landscape

The traditional shape of a Bangwa house is described “as a cube on a shallow circular foundation of stones surmounted by a conical thatch roof. The tall solid houses are impressive to look at”. The size and proportions vary according to the importance of the building but the basic shape of a domestic hut and of a large meeting house is the same. Palaces in Bamileke area experience fire accidents every ten years. They are difficult to find and are often sited at the end of a widening path and in thick forest grooves. The king, as a channel for the spirits of land and ancestors, resides here. In the palaces of some chiefs there are remarkable royal and ceremonial buildings, panelled with raffia bamboos or woven “mats” still seen at Bafut, Mankon and Fontem.

In general, in the Western High Plateau settlement pattern is of the dispersed type. Traditional houses are round with bamboo and mud walls while the roofs are thatched. In the Bamum enclaves houses are of the square and lofty types. Although some are rectangular too, the walls are made of sun dried bricks and the roofs thatched.

In the savannah zone, houses are built in such a manner that they are able to withstand heavy rainfall and variable diurnal temperatures. The roof usually made of grass or thatch are constructed in such a way that they project out. This is a device for providing shade from the burning midday sun and for providing warmth against cold nights.

The walls of houses are either short or tall and heavy in order to absorb heat during the day and radiate it at night; in addition such walls are a form of device for ventilation. The various kinds of traditional architecture are a typical example of this adaptation to climate.

The Forest Region

Most forests of the country occur in the southern part of Cameroon. The pygmies were probably the first occupants of the southern forest region. They have been pushed into the inhospitable parts of the forest by the Bantu (Gwanfogbe *et al*, 1983). Their house type consists of a domed shape wattle made of wood and covered with leaves (See Fig. 14).

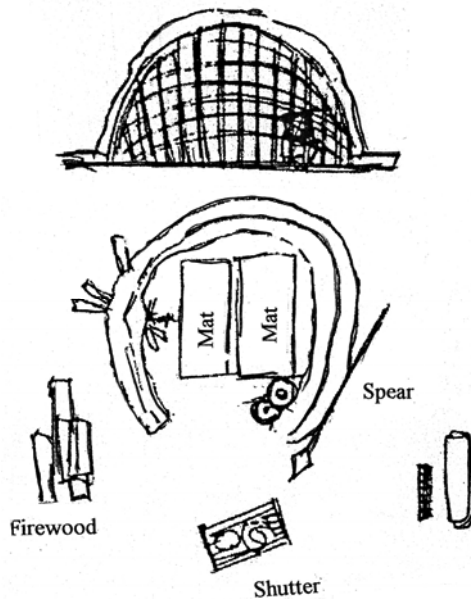


Figure 14: Section of Pigmy dwelling in the rainforest

Another human group of the forested region are the Beti and related tribes whose style of architecture consists of houses that are rectangular in shape with thatched roofs. The walls are made of stakes and bamboo that form a trellis that is sealed with mud (see Fig. 15). These forest architecture shows how traditional architecture can adapt to local conditions. Its major characteristic is that it has used the materials available in the environment.

Huts on piles exist in the coastal village of Debunscha. This area is known to have the highest rainfall in Africa. Coastal villages around this region at the beginning of the 20th century had native houses built with bamboos and were rectangular in shape and roofed with plantain and banana leaves.

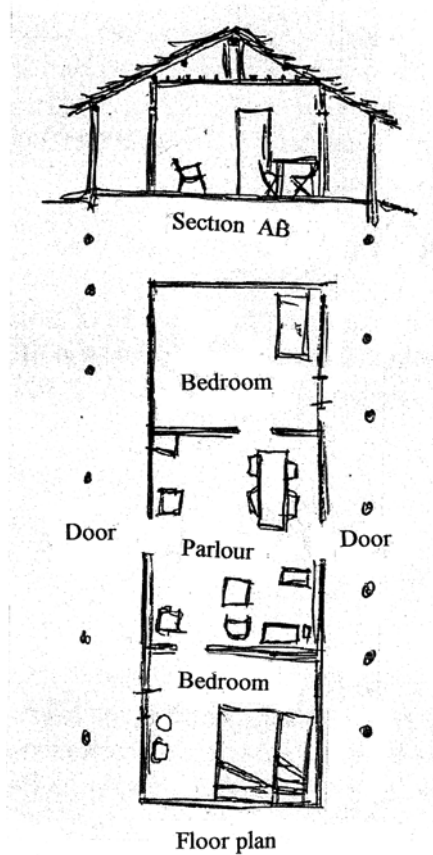


Figure15: Section of Beti dwelling in the rainforest

Figure 15 is a section of Beti homestead. About 1890 these houses were constructed with thatched roofs. The roofing is made of raphia palm leaves. These are plaited into sheets. After independence, walls of such houses in the coastal Douala and Bakweri area and around Mount Cameroon were constructed with wood and thatch. Today, it is wood and corrugated iron sheets that are used (figure 16).

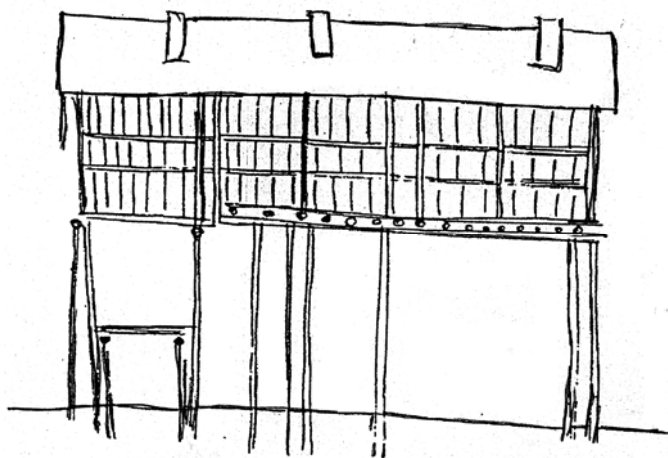


Figure 16: Rural dwelling on pile in the rainforest

Details of the Traditional House: Bamenda Plateau

The four walls, two ceilings and the four triangular roof sectors are made of bamboo pole latticework. These are pre-fabricated and assembled by binding the joints with ropes obtained from young raphia bamboo stems. The ceiling is laid on the four walls (Figure 17). It is larger than the ground plan of the house. This architecture has been precisely described by Knopfli (1998). The ceiling extends beyond the walls to create overhanging eaves (Figure 17). About one metre below, a second ceiling, known as “banda” is fitted in between the walls. Above the ceiling the four triangular roof sections are assembled and joined. The assembled framework of the roof is thatched with savannah grass. The interior of the house may be panelled with bamboo and the external walls plastered with reddish-brown laterite mud. In some cases both the internal and external walls are plastered with mud. There is only one relatively small doorway, with a built-in bamboo shutter which slides horizontally. The traditional grassland house has no windows. The smoke from the hearth rises in the one room house and finds its way out through the thatch, thus smoking meat hanging down from the smoke-grid and drying the stored grain crops on the “banda” as well as preserving the grass thatch against harmful insects and decomposition.

Several house posts support the heavy thatched roof with its comparative large overhang. The main wooden posts are usually of plain wood. In the case of a house within the village chief's palace, a house of the member of the royalty outside the palace, or a house of a notable, the slender posts between the sturdy main supports are carved with royal symbols, and so is the door frame. In large buildings such as halls, there is at least one huge high central pillar that is beautifully and richly carved.

The carvings on posts and pillars depict the history of the particular ethnic group. Sculpture is used to depict great events and legendary beliefs. These posts are memorabilia. This is a method of “writing down” what appeared to be worth preserving. Figures are closely packed one on top of the other and a whole scene can be shown on one and the same post. In some cases, house posts are tinted with camwood. These are typical of the grassfields (Bamenda, Bamoun, Bamileke land). Figure 18 presents typical carved door frames in the Aghem area (Wum). If door surrounds are carved at all today, they are of a simpler design than in the past. The original doorframe was a two-sided frame with the two sides at right angles. Each vertical corner piece had to be hewn by hand work out of one piece of tree trunk. One side of each was notched at the top and the bottom: at the top to support the lintel and the bottom for the threshold to be hooked in. The most common symbolic motifs carved on such doorframes were the house spider, doubles gong, and the giant lizard. These symbols are understood in relation to the background of the house owners: chief, sub-chief, king makers and traditional dignitaries. These are charged with maintaining social peace, exercising authority and promoting life.

The doorframe was built into the wattle-and-daub walls about 60 to 80cm above the ground level. Since domestic animals were raised at free range, the threshold was made so high to prevent domestic animals (pigs, goats, fowls). One or two stepping stones were placed at the door steps to facilitate entry into the house. The door opening was usually small and low (approximately 100cm x 63cm). The door shutter was made of a bamboo board fixed together by three wooden sticks driven through them from top to bottom. The original door was a sliding door, fixed inside the house and held together by nails made of the stem of a raphia bamboo crown. A hole big enough for three fingers was made at a convenient place in the door to serve as a “handle” or grip position.

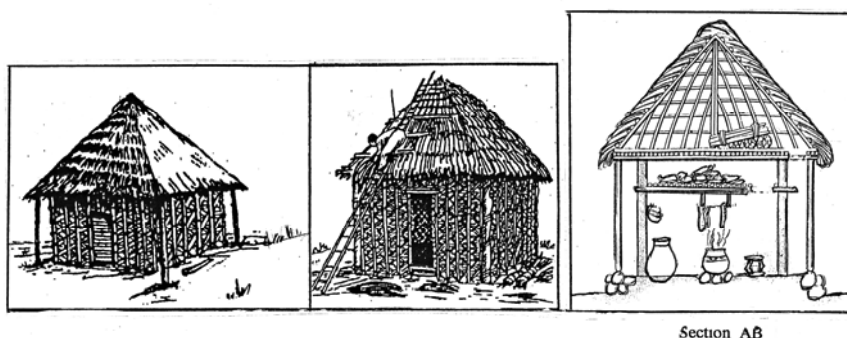


Figure 17a: Architecture of the Grassfields (Bamenda Highlands) house: Rural dwelling and section.

The rails guiding the movement of the sliding door shutter were not only fixed above and below the door opening, but extended as far along the wall to the left and right of the doorway as was necessary to hold the door in position when it was opened. A similar board was kept inside by the side of the door. It served as a temporary portable door shutter. The last person who went out of the house placed it in front of the door opening, leaning it from inside against the walls. This is done to dissuade goats, sheep, fowls, and pigs from entering the house. Most sliding doors were provided with a lock. Where the rails ran along the wall of the house they were fixed by five vertical bamboo poles. Two of these were fixed about 10cm apart, close to the edge of the doorframe. They were an essential part of all the locking mechanisms.



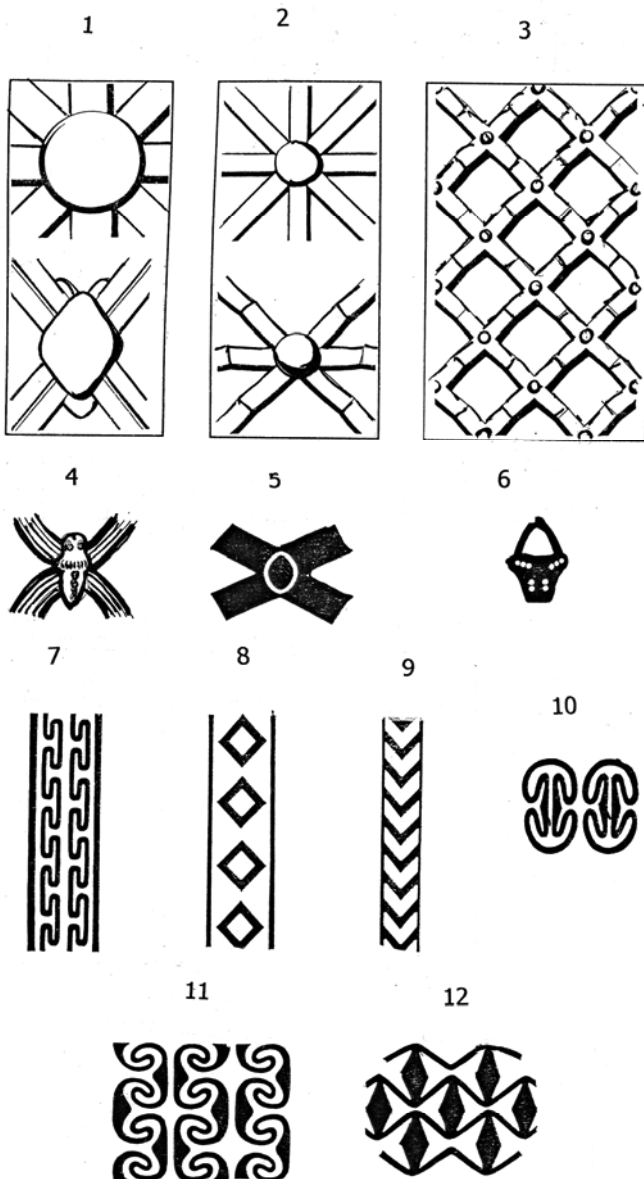
Figure 17b: Construction of the Grassfield house

There are some threats to the traditional house:

Thatching material: Thatching materials for the roof is mainly *Hyparrheria* grass species. Material is obtained from the grass Savannah. The main grasses are *Hyparrheria chrysargyrea*, *H. Cymbaria*, *H. diplandra*, *H. familiaris*, *H. Filipendula*, *H. Lecomtei*, *H. rotolaria*, *H. rufa* and *H. Poecilotricha*. Soft grass for thatching is harvested between December and February. Today, most savannahs are rapidly being converted into farmland and homesteads because of population pressure. Most savannahs are now natural pastures and are burnt annually to provoke fresh growth. Good quality, soft grass for thatching is fast disappearing and is out of the convenient reach of most village communities (Figure 17).

Bamboo Poles: Bamboo forest (*Arundinaria alpine*) form at an attitude of 2300 to 2500m above sea level. These are used to construct the structural framework of houses. Over the years these have been degraded by bush fires and over-harvesting. Elsewhere raphia bamboo (*Raphia vinefera*) is used. These are harvested from gallery swamp forest. These provide the bamboo poles and the binding ropes. These forests are rapidly being degraded by gardens and homesteads. House posts are also obtained from date palms (*Phoenix reclinata*) found in the gallery swamp forest.

Carving wood: Carving wood for doorposts and house posts is increasingly becoming scarce. The main species include *Polyscias fulva* (*Araliaceae*), *schefflera abyssinica* (*Araliaceae*), *croton macrotachyus* (*Euphorbiaceae*), *Tabernaemontana pachysiphon*, *Vitex ciliate*, *Azelia bipendensis*, *cordial platithyra*, *Funtumia elastica*, *Sorindea peliodes* (*Anacarddiaceae*), *Raivolfia vomitoria* (*Apocynaceae*), and *Kegelia Africana* (*Bignonia*). The species have been heavily degraded by man. Almost any kind of wood is used now for carving, that is the cheapest and most accessible types. Good wood for carving is today only refuted in mountain escarpments, montane forest and difficult topographic sites. The main icons on carved wood are presented in Figure 18. These are carved on pillars, posts, sticks, (staff). They are also used in embroidery and weaving. The promotion of crafts can provide cheap tribal items as souvenirs for the development of rural tourism in rural districts and cultural villages. The memorabilia on carvings present a rich history of cultural landscapes and a biophysical environment at the verge of disappearance.



Iconography: 1. Earth Spider; 2. House Spider; 3. Hunting net; 4. Spider; 5; Spider; 6. Buffalo; 7. Chicken entrails; 8. Vagina; 9. Spearhead; 10. Frog; 11. Frog; 12. Frog.

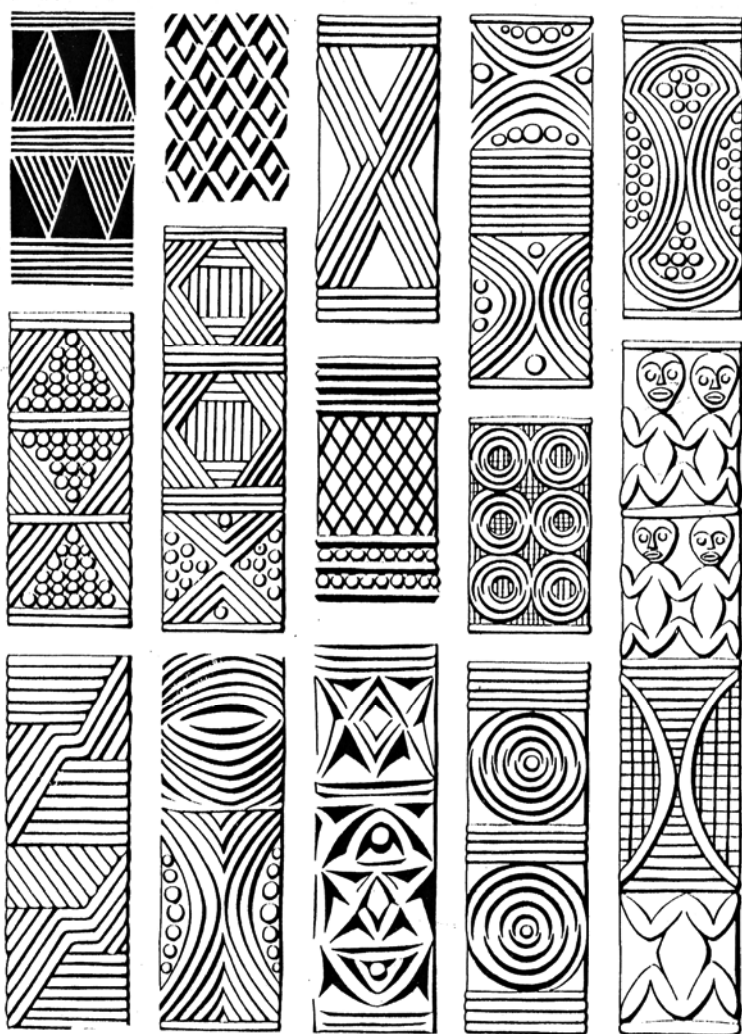


Figure 18: Grassfield iconography

Eco-cultural erosion: The grassland house with its high pyramid roof structure has almost disappeared. The indigenous house constructions as well as the traditional values of art and craft are fast disappearing. The traditional wall and roof construction, made of bamboo poles, is giving way to the use of sun-dried mud blocks or cement blocks. The grass thatching on the pyramided bamboo framework is replaced by corrugated aluminium sheets on a gable roof constructed of timber. If these traditional values of art and craft were to be abandoned, it would be a tremendous loss. It would be unnecessary. Any modern economy, conscious of its heritage,

provides artists and craftsmen with a ready market for their products, and conservatories for the transmission of their skills to younger generations. It would be a loss for Cameroon, if this were not so. It would be a loss for any human being.

Apparently for a considerable length of time the construction of traditional grassland houses has halted. No new traditional houses are being built. Bamboo workers, thatchers and carvers have been compelled to abandon their craft and art for there has been no demand for it. The introduction of coffee as a cash crop during the colonial period enabled farmers have enough cash to do away with the traditional houses and to replace them with semi-permanent buildings built with sun-dried mud blocks and pan-roofed with the durable galvanised English made corrugated roofing sheets bearing the trade mark "Hand Brand". Soon after independence in 1961 the importation of these quality sheets was stopped and substituted by the importation of cheaper Japanese "Star Brand" sheets which were of inferior quality. In the 1970s the importation of roofing sheets and cement stopped altogether. Cameroon developed an aluminium factory in Edea and cement factory in Douala. These new, locally available building materials and the Euro-African contact brought in new architectural styles. These have gradually displaced the traditional houses. The carving of door-posts has come to a standstill in all the villages because of both the lack of expert carvers and the lack of demand.

The way forward: Traditional architecture was development as man's shelters or living structures. This reflected both the bio-physical environment, the social organization and the ways and manner the people occupy space. The structure, layout and building materials depict the technological enterprise and adaptation to the physical environment in order to enhance survival and community growth. There is need to research and re-awaken this craft and art. This will require research that seeks to obtain systematic and creative works that can widen the modern architect's knowledge, increase his scientific-technical database and reveal new application possibilities in a modern world. In this revival and modernization process key aspect to draw lessons on include:

The modern architect as a specialist must apply scientific techniques and know how to construct simple to complex structures that overcome architectural problems and at the same time practically present forms that belong to the cultural heritage.

- Integrate the traditional architect and builder in modern architecture in order to express in form and symbols memorabilia, a rational and objective truth of events, space and time.
- Integrate symbols that reflect the importance of the patriarchal leadership as a basic stabilizing force in the hierarchical structure of society using sculptural depictions.
- Integrate symbols that reflect an understanding of the environment, especially the nature of a large number of wild animals and plants that can be used as ornamental plants. Through traditional architecture one can learn to see some parts of the natural environment through traditional eyes. This is a point of view of vital importance for the future of Cameroon, a call for concern because we are interested in a transition of the craft into an unknown future. Most of these animals however, have become extinct or are threatened.
- Create forms and symbols that communicate messages to the group who occupy a cultural unit. Forms that depict or are repository of ideas adapted to the biophysical, socio-economic and cultural environment and history.
- Identify innovative forms, symbols and details that will enhance the aesthetics of the traditional house in a new socio-economic environment.
- Revive, modernize and maintain a cultural heritage in a rapidly changing world environment by researching and documenting traditional architectural styles that reflect the cultural identity of Cameroon; that is, the response of the people to the biophysical environment, culture, history, agrarian civilization and man's response to the range of material's provided by the biological and physical environment.
- Identify the scope for modernising the traditional dwelling in terms of building materials, functions, and quality in order to create modern villages unique to our cultural and technological heritage. This identity is necessary if our cultural and physical landscapes have to form a basis for eco-cultural tourism in a future dominated by increasing globalisation. Planners need to research and reconstruct cultural villages. These are works of local people, dances folklore and staple foods restoration. Such cultural villages constitute a basis for the development of rural tourism. (Figure 19 and Figure 20).
- Rural people, their culture and environments constitute a repository of our cultural and natural heritage. There is need to develop traditional villages as National Heritage landscapes and spatial units under Rural District Development Projects (RDDP). If this is not done, a cultural erosion is eminent. The traditional dwelling deserves restoration and modernization as a measure to improve rural livelihoods in upgraded villages with social and professional homogeneity, and strong attachment to traditional

values and ties. Such viable spatial units with a viable agricultural base, crafts and traditional skills constitute a solid base for eco-cultural tourism, cottage industries and limited job markets for relatively small populations –measures that can arrest rural- urban exodus. Adding value to the traditional dwelling has been achieved to some extent by the modern architect in the Bamileke land.

Decentralization and transference of functions of the local decision-makers (District councils) in homogenous council areas is sure to foster these measures- creation of monuments, promotion of indigenous iconography for crafts and traditional dwellings, craft centres, cottage industries, council area markets, agricultural and local trade fairs, museums, upgrading of palaces in chiefdoms and institution of cultural festivals with the participation of rural people.

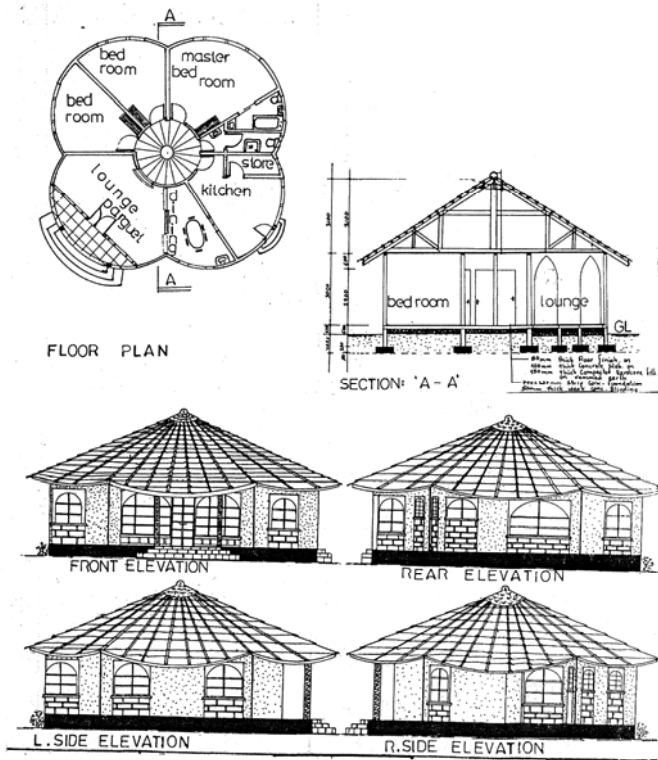


Figure 19: Modern dwelling of the type in the savanna areas.

Decentralisation needs measures to strengthen the accountability and administrative efficiency as well as democratising the decision-making process at the local authority level. In this way each districts will seek to

create functional and cultural landscapes for sustaining the livelihoods of its population.

In contrast to the process of urbanization in developed countries, which was already bound up with industrialisation in the nineteenth century, the towns in developing countries are growing mainly because of the lack of income opportunities in rural areas. People's social and cultural roots, however, remain firmly attached to the rural areas at the same time. Rural life styles and methods of construction are carried over into the towns and cities. Urban and rural areas need to be integrated, but with defined development strategies.

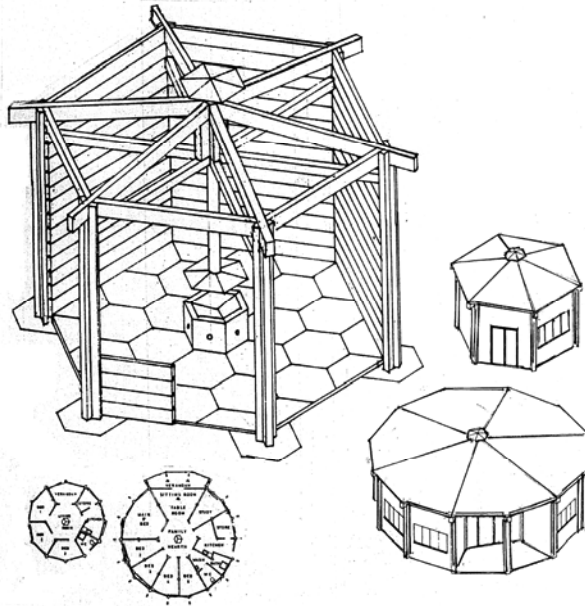


Figure 20: Modern dwelling of the type in the Chad basin

The notion that the problems of cities can be solved by applying a strategy for rural areas is implausible in theory and has been refuted in practice by developments over the past two decades (Konukiewitz, 2001). Urban problems must be solved in the urban environment, and rural problems in the rural areas. In addressing these problems, the multifarious interdependencies that exist, especially in terms of demography, economics and resource economics, must be acknowledged and taken into consideration. Urban and rural areas need linkages. Decentralization is only meaningful in terms of urban –rural relations if it extends to the village level. Unfortunately, this has not received much attention. Against this background the following question arises: how can decentralization reach the rural population, and what consequences does it have in terms of shaping rural – urban relations? This issue will be explored in the next chapters.

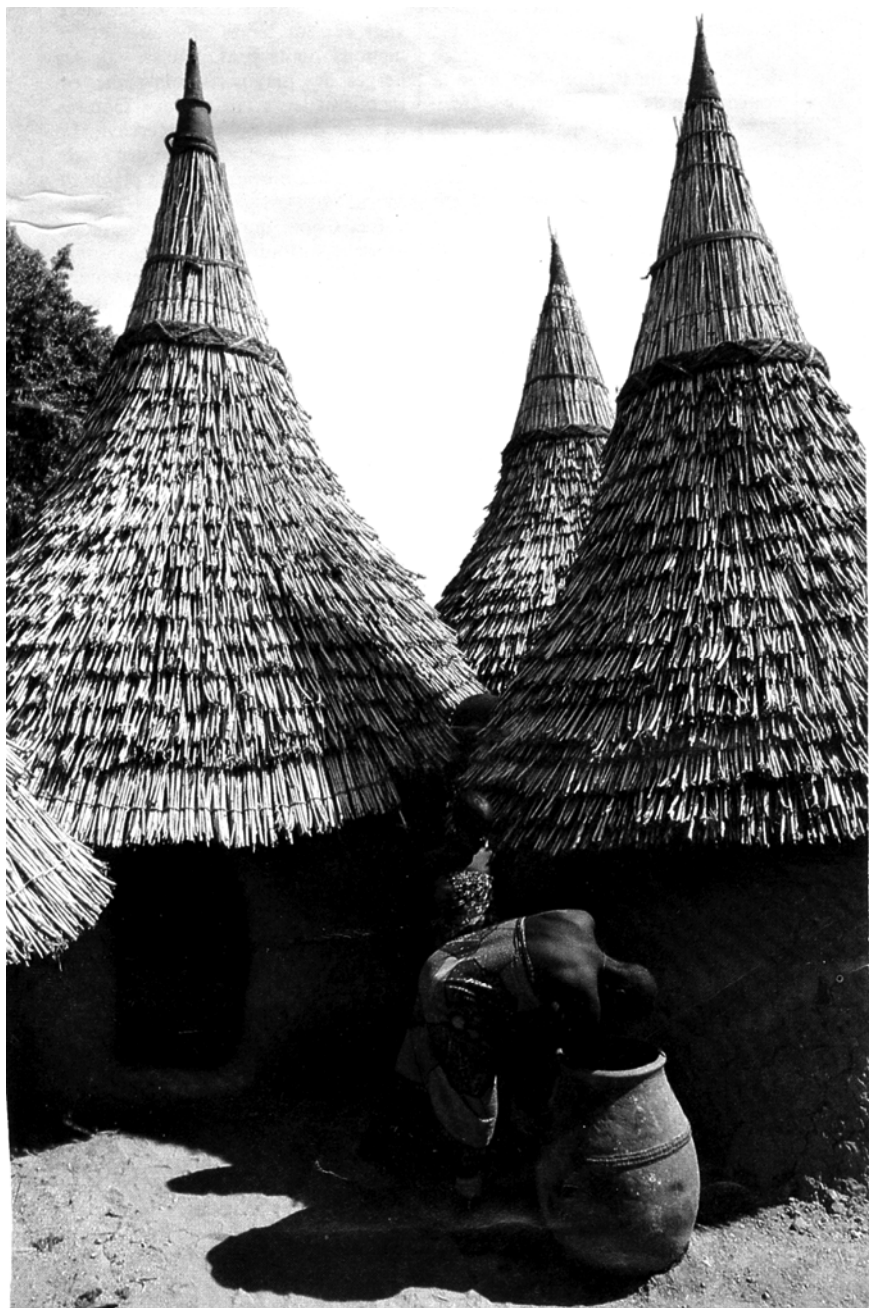


Plate 1: Matakam house in Mokolo: Sahel region



Plate 2: Sare at Mokolo: Sahel savanna ecological climate



Plate 3: Grain storage technology in Poli: Sudano-Sahelian ecological climate



Plate 4: Decoratively thatched roof: rural house in Northern Region (Sudan Savanna ecological climate)

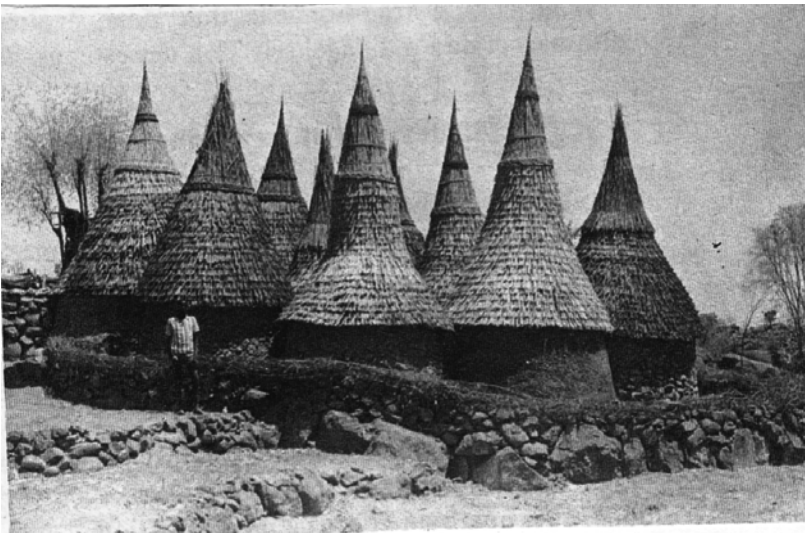


Plate 5: Rural habitat in Mafa country: Sahel ecological climate



Plate 6: Mousoum mud dwelling: Sudano-Sahelian ecological climate

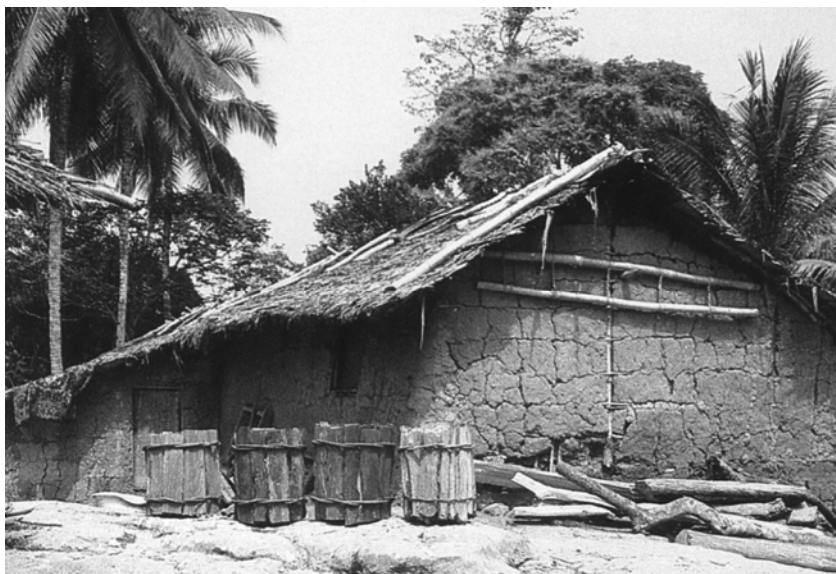


Figure 7: Rural dwelling in Mamfe (Bayange land): Rainforest ecological climate

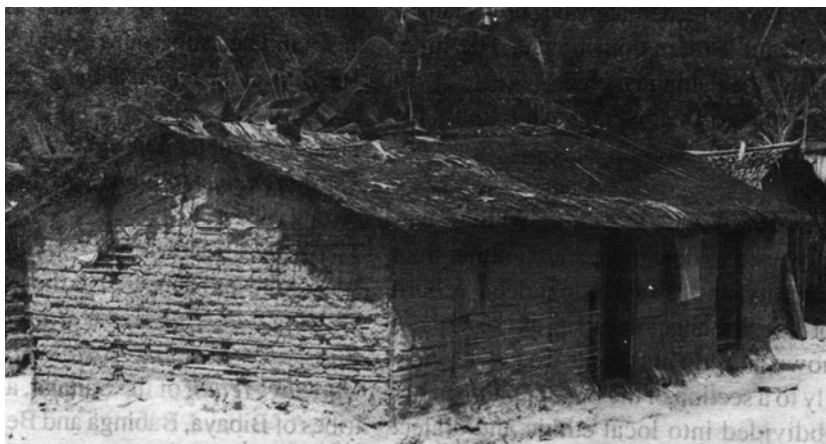


Plate 8: Rural habitat in Ewondo land: Rainforest ecological climate



Plate 9: Tribal Chief's (Fon) residence in Bafut (Bamenda: High Savanna eco-climate



Plate 10: Rural dwelling in Babungo (Ndop). The wall is constructed of earth blocks. Women manufacture clay pots used for potable water storage.



Plate 11: Rural dwelling in Esu chiefdom (Menchum): High savanna ecological climate

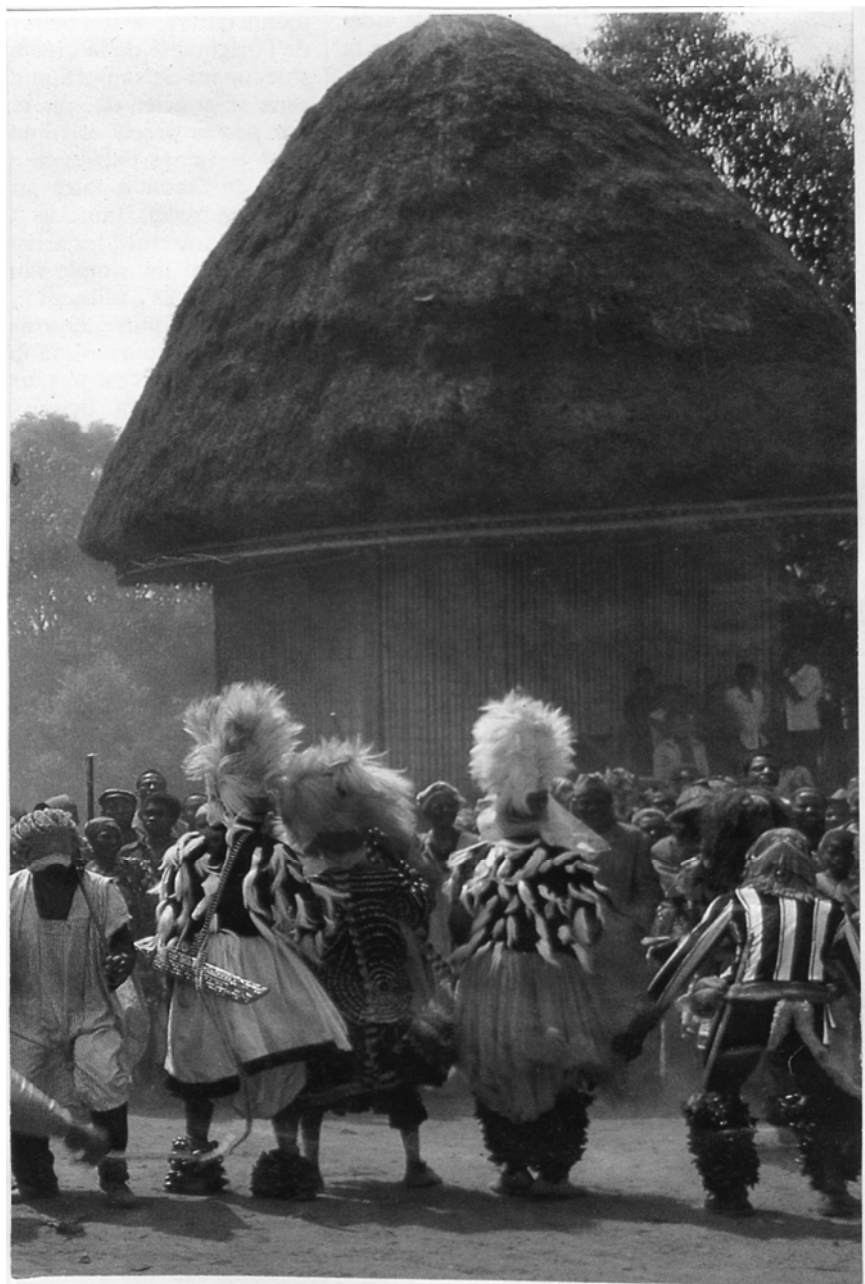


Plate 12: Traditional house and masquerades in Bamileke land: High savanna ecological climate

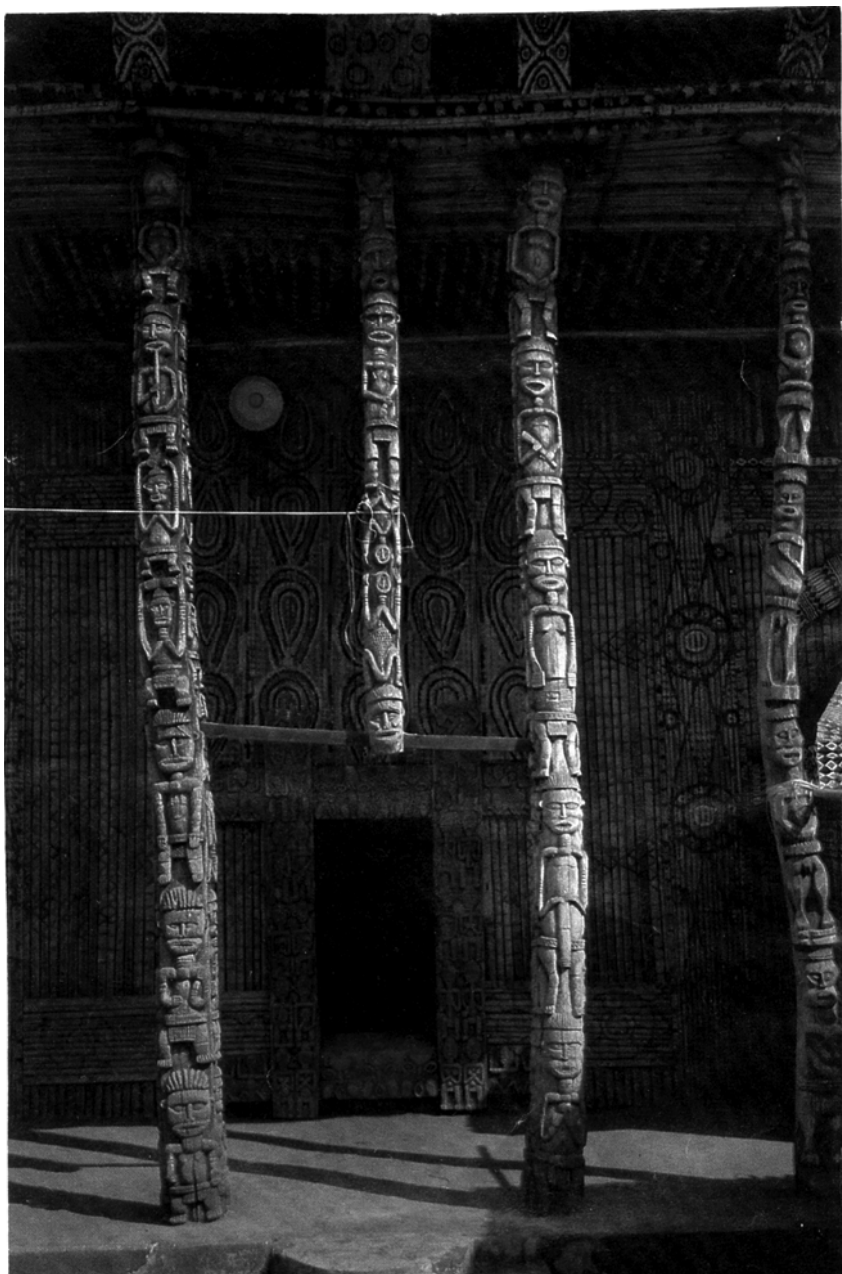


Plate 13: Entrance of an elder's house in a Bamileke chiefdom: High savanna eco-climate.

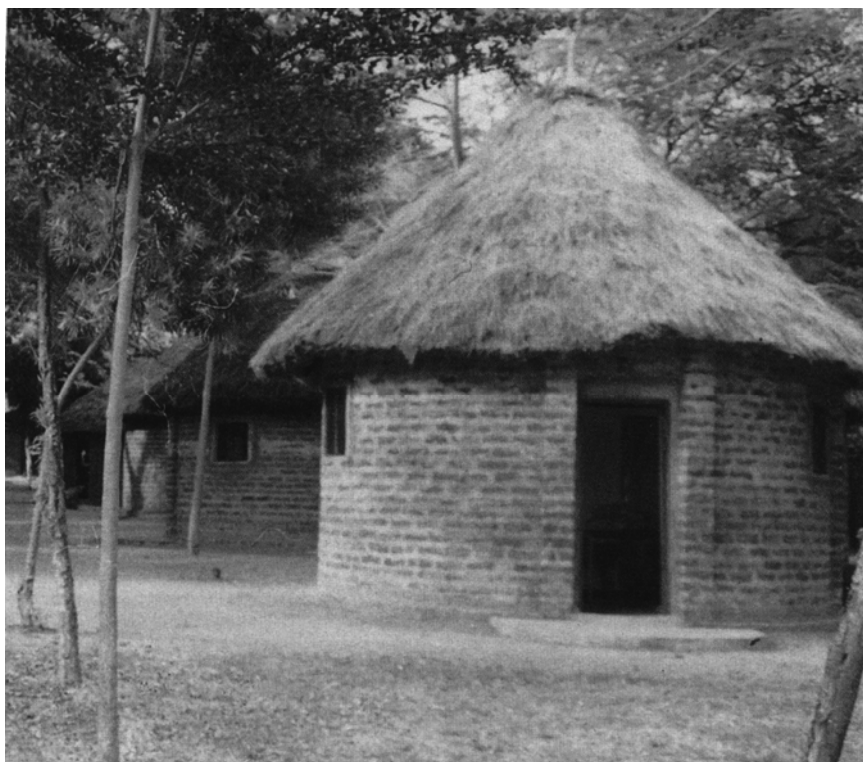


Plate 14: Modernised rural dwellings (huts): built of red brick and thatch.

Typology of rural settlement

Every settlement is unique, and has a personality of its own. Each village and farm, too, is a distinctive item in the landscape, and has no precise duplicate. Villages often occupy similar sites, share the same form and perform similar functions, and individual buildings, though varying regionally, are in a particular area, generally built of identical material and assume the same shape. It is therefore possible to adopt a comparative treatment and to attempt some classification in Cameroon. The latter may be based on size, site and situation, function, age, building materials, cultural characteristics or the layout of the dwellings and tracks.

Cameroon is often referred to as “Africa in miniature” because of its great cultural, ethnic and geographical diversity. The country, extends across four biogeographical zones within the Afro-tropical realm. Cameroon is marked by South-north gradation of both climatic and vegetational types. The equatorial climate in the south is marked by the tropical rainforest which gradually merges with the woodland /savannah types to the north. The biophysical and cultural diversity has also resulted to a diversity of forms of settlement and rural habitats.

Shapes and forms of single dwellings

In his paper “L’habitation rurale en France” (*Annales de Géographie*), the French geographer Demangeon attempted for his own country a classification of rural dwellings based on their shape, which he found varied with the types of agriculture practiced by their inhabitants. Geographers feel that this classification is too rigid, and that in most rural areas the form of the house depends on the climatic, functions of the farmstead, availability of building materials, and the stage of agrarian development (nomadic, foraging, shifting cultivation, permanent cultivation), that is, temporary or permanent settlements.

In Cameroon, most settlements have some degree of permanence, even though their buildings may have to be replaced from time to time, or their functions may alter. Some settlements however are temporary. These are occupied seasonally and then left untenanted, or they may be transient that they occupy a particular site for only a short time, and are then either abandoned or shifted elsewhere. Villages are relatively permanent elements in the landscape as Cameroon enters the third millennium. People engaged in hunting and gathering erect dwellings in a very short time and these are made out of locally available materials. Some examples in the country include:

- The very simple and crude wind-breaks of the pigmies of the rainforest. These shelters, at best, consist merely of a partial circle of tree boughs driven into the ground, bent over to form a half dome and lashed together by a lattice of strong grasses or other fibres. They provide protection against the sun, wind and rain, especially when covered with leaves or bark, Pigmies are a foraging tribe (Plate15).



Plate 15: Pigmy (Baka) settlement in the rainforest region: Temporary dwelling for hunters and foragers

- The dwellings of semi-nomadic pastoralists are rather more elaborate than those of the hunters or foragers (pigmies) because herders usually possess some form of transport which they can use to carry constructional material, provided these materials are not too bulky, too heavy or too fragile. Thus the Fulani of the Savannah eco-climate make their dwellings or huts out of plaited stakes covered with grass. The huts are usually assembled in groups to ensure protection against marauding animals or human predators, and are usually sited close to water source (Plate 16)



Plate 16: Traditional Mbororo house (Santa): High savanna ecological climate: Temporary dwelling for nomadic people

- The same is also true of other socially cohesive people such as the Bantu shifting cultivators of the rainforest whose villages, however, are commonly more substantially built as they are designed to last for at least a few years. Shifting cultivation of both the rainforest and the savannah eco-climatic zones are dependent upon building materials furnished by the environment such as vegetation and mud. Thus the dominant house in the savannah region is a small conical or beehive hut, the walls of which are of light timber plastered with mud, the roofs thatched with grass. A number of huts are usually erected close together to form a roughly circular kraal, surrounding which is a strong thorn fence enclosing and protecting cattle which are brought in at night (Fig. 21).

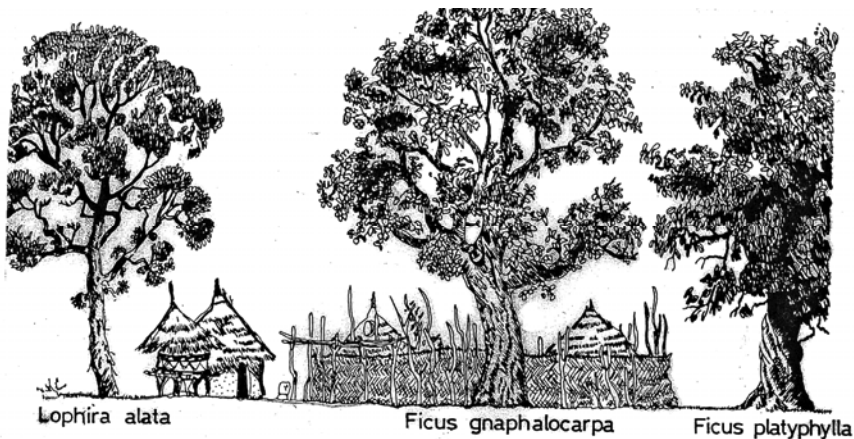


Figure 21: Rural dwelling and park Savanna landscape in Baya country (North Cameroon). Note the granary outside the mat enclosure. Useful trees are retained around dwellings.

Most settlements in the country are more permanent. These include dispersed houses and farmsteads and villages. These are rural settlement whose inhabitants depend for their livelihood upon the exploitation of the soil. The inhabitants are settled in villages and hamlets known as “Quarters”. Villages are headed by village chiefs and the inhabitants share a common ancestry.

Villages: Agglomerations of hamlets

There is no consensus about what is a village. In trying to elucidate the difference between a village and a town, size has been considered as a criterion in Cameroon. An agglomeration of 5000 inhabitants and above is considered a town. This is certainly no criterion because some settlements may have populations up to 5000 inhabitants without possessing the attributes of a town, while a number of market towns may support perhaps less than 5000 people and yet enjoy urban status.

Within a village, it is usual to regard quarters or hamlets as small villages or sub-villages. These often belong to village chiefdoms. In a hamlet the buildings are fewer and loosely clustered. It may have a church or mosque, school and generally with inferior communication to the village centre or seat of the chiefdom (Chief's Palace). Strict definition especially on a population bases, is loose. Thus the population of an area dominated by a large village may reach as much as 200 people while in a small village it may amount only to 10 people.

Farming systems and the village structure

A typical example of animal husbandry in a farming system in the sudano-sahelian climate which passed from fallow to permanent farming system is supplied by Guillard (1965) in his monograph about the village of Galonpoui in northern Cameroon. The distribution of cattle on the village land during the different seasons is presented in figure 22.

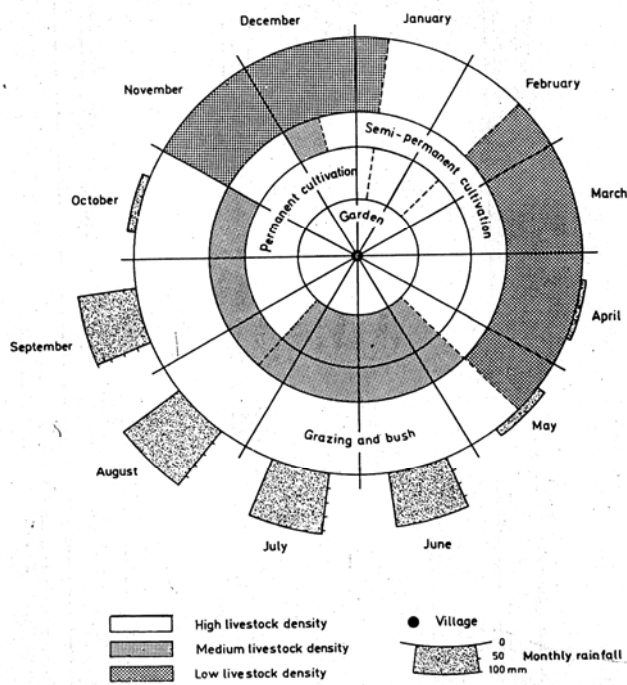


Figure 22: Rural land use in Golonpoui village, North Cameroon



Plate 17: Traditional house of the Fon of Bali (North West Region): Bantu permanent Settlement



Plate 18: Carved-door frame of a Bamileke noble's house and his bed (West Region. Bantu permanent settlements.



Plate 19: Bamileke traditional dance festival. Rural tourism can constitute an alternative income generation activity. It must revamp the art and culture of the people



Plate 20: Musicians of the Sultan of Fumban's Palace. Tribal palaces and surrounding homesteads constitute potential resources for rural tourism.

At the beginning of the wet season in June or July, the animals graze on the arable land that is not yet cultivated or is lying fallow. As cropping progresses, the animals are concentrated on the fallows, which are 2 to 3 km from the village. In October, millet straw from the permanent gardens provides additional fodder. At the beginning of the dry season, the animals are driven to bush grazing further afield (Yaeres or flood plains). This is interrupted in January and the animals spend the rest of the dry season, from February to May in the more distant grazing areas. In addition the leaves and fruits of acacias (*Acacia albida*) scattered in the arable land are used.

Pahai (1979) describes land use in Bagara village (near Yagoua) in the Sudan-Sahel zone. The landscape is park savanna with widely scattered dwellings. The climate (822mm of rainfall) allows the cultivation of cereals, groundnuts and vegetables in association with millet from May to September. These are intensively cultivated around dwellings. The cultivation of crops under irrigation (tobacco and vegetables) begins in November. These are grown on small plots along river banks in flood plain areas up to April. During the heart of the dry season these are grown in the river bed near pools of water since most of the rivers are seasonal. There are also orchards surrounded by thorn bushes. Agriculture is market oriented due to the proximity of Yagoua town.

Tissandier (1979) describes a typical settlement in the rainforest eco-climate. The settlements result from a regrouping of dispersed settlements along motorable roads in the form of hamlets. Similar linear settlements are also found in the savanna region. Such settlements have multi-storey gardens (home-gardens) in permanent cultivation around the dwelling (cocoa, plantains, coffee). There are also outlying fields cultivated under bush fallow systems. These settlements reflect secondary kinships. The outlying fields are ancestral plots.

Land use in the West Cameroon Highlands or Grassfields (derived Savannas) is characterised by agroforestry home-gardens. There are three elements of the landscape as can be found in the Bamileke land (See Figure 23 and 24):

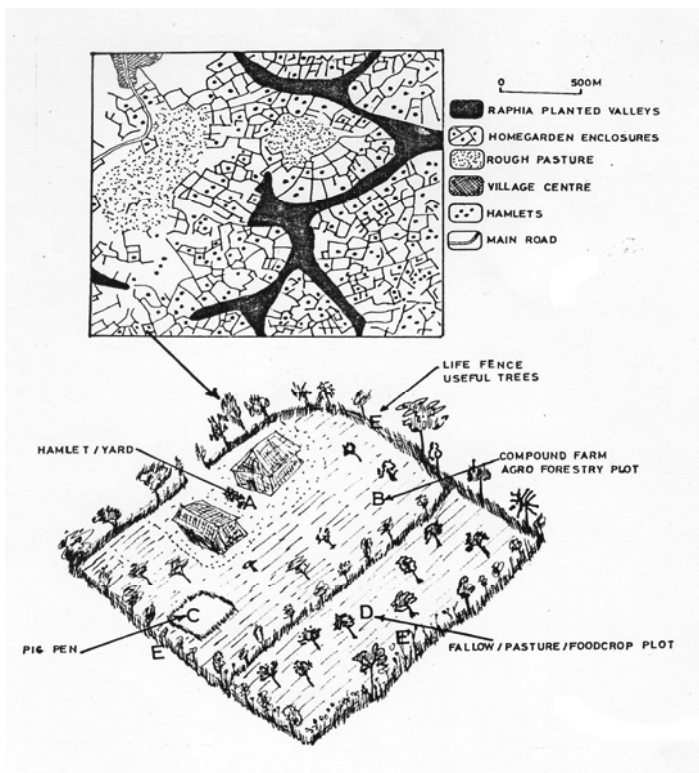


Figure 23: Live fence enclosure of agroforestry compound farms in the densely populated Western Highlands: Bamendjou

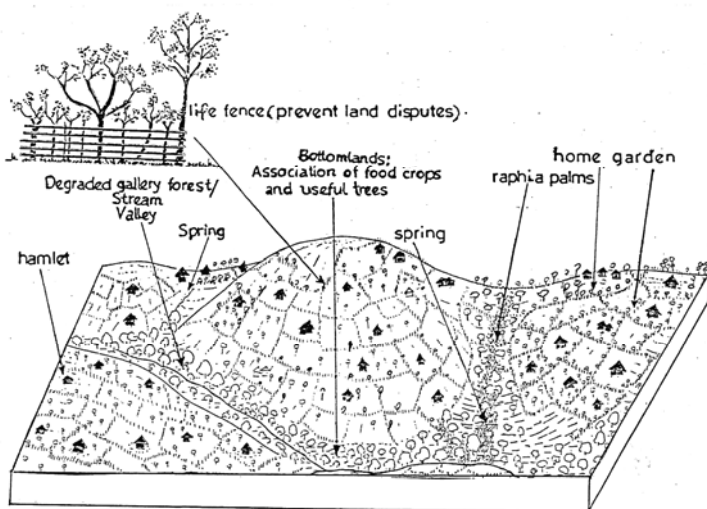


Figure 24: The hedge enclosure (live fences) of the Bamileke land

- Valley bottoms colonised by raphia palms. These provide construction materials, and palm wine.
- The middle and lower slopes are characterised by homesteads and home-gardens separated from each other by hedge-rows and live fences. These provide services (shade, wind-breaks) and products (medicine, food, fuelwood, timber, etc);
- The summits are used as rough pastures for raising goats. Due to high demographic pressure hill tops are being invaded by dwellings.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that farming in rural communities is inextricably linked with culture and history. Geographical and ecological opportunities and constraints (location, climate, soil, topographic site, availability of water, local plants and animals) are reflected in the local culture, the form and functions of settlements and land use. This is reflected in turn in the local agriculture, which is the result of a continuous historical process of interactions between man and the local resources. The rural society's values, knowledge, skills, technologies and institutions greatly influence the type of agriculture (agri-culture) that evolved – and continues to evolve. These considerations are very important in rural settlement planning.

Farming system and the human setting

The term “farming system” refers to a particular arrangement of farming enterprises (cropping, livestock keeping and processing farm products) that are managed in response to the physical, biological, and socio-economic environment and in accordance with the farmers’ goals, preferences and resources (Shaner *et al.*, 1982). Individual farms with enterprises arranged in a similar way are said to practise that particular farming system. Farming here is used in a wide sense to include not only crops and livestock but also the other natural resources available to the farm households, including resources held in common with others. Hunting, fishing, harvesting timber and non-timber products, and also the extensive grazing of livestock on natural pastures can all form part of a farming system.

Although farms within a given farming system resemble each other, each individual farm has different physical, biological and human resources. Therefore, each is a unique farm system (see Figure 25).

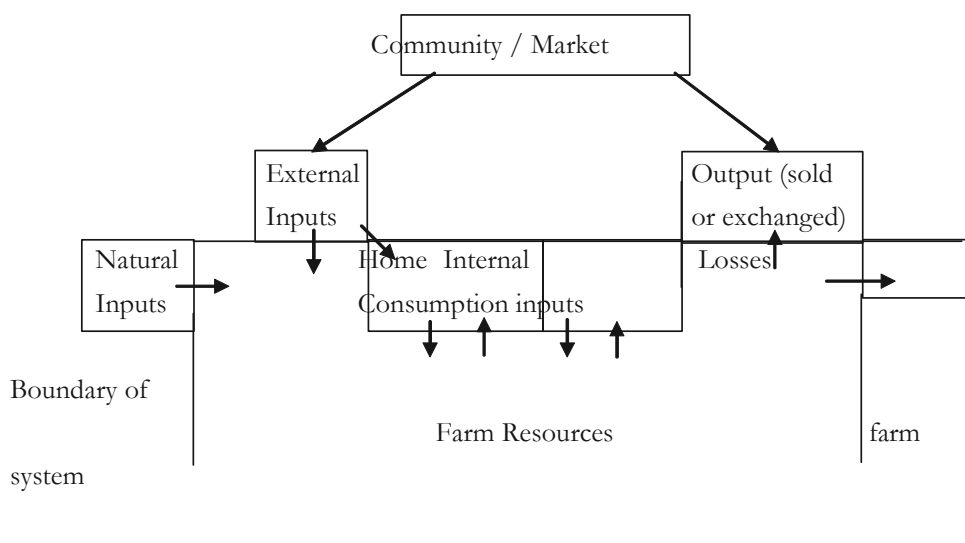


Figure 25: Flow of goods and services in a farm system

The farm is a contribution of natural inputs such as land, soil, water, plants and animals. By influencing the components of the system the farm household obtains outputs or products such as crops, wood and materials. To keep the production process going, the household needs inputs (seeds, manure, water). Internal inputs are those harvested on the farm (organic matter, water, soil minerals). External inputs are those obtained from outside the farm (information, hired labour, fossil fuel, mineral fertilisers, chemical biocides, improved seeds and breeds, tools and services). The outputs can be used as internal inputs, consumed by the farm household (reproducing farm labour) or sold, exchanged or given away. During the production process some losses occur, as a result of leaching and erosion. The sales provide cash, which can be used to buy different goods or services (food, clothes, education, transport, inputs). Members of a single household use natural resources in many different ways – cropping, gardening, raising of animals, hunting and gathering wild plants in order to serve their many different needs. Besides producing food, fibre, wood and various minor products such as medicines, thatching materials and ornaments, these activities have other functions including spreading risks and making sure that production can continue. Farm systems in the various biogeographic regions of the country are therefore usually very complex. To gain their livelihoods, households do not depend solely on farming. Their other income generating activities compete with agricultural activities for limited labour force of the household. It would be more realistic to examine the livelihood system of a rural

household when elaborating models for rural development planning, but this will make the models very complex. Rural physical planning therefore tends to focus on farm system, without losing sight of the fact that this is only part of the entire livelihood system of a rural household.

Apart from the biophysical setting, a farm system is also determined by the socio-economic, cultural and political characteristics, foremost those of the farm household. Each household is a unique combination of men and women, adults and children, who provide the management, knowledge, labour, capital and land for farming, and who consume at least part of the produce. The farm household is thus a centre of resource allocation, production and consumption.

The rural household may consist of subsystems or sub-households such as wives, and children and their farms. The rural household functions in the context of the wider economic, social, cultural and political systems through its external relations which in turn influence the farming system. External relations, such as via the market or mass media or introduction and diffusion of innovations will influence the rural household and, thus, the farm system. These are important considerations for rural development planning.

In most rural communities, ties with the community are strong, for example, family ties, common history and culture, and the land tenure system interconnect the individual farm system. Community members may use land in common and give support to each other by sharing and exchanging labour, animal traction, fields or farm products. These interactions serve to hedge risks and are part of the survival strategies of families and individuals. Different family members may be involved in different networks within the community.

In some communities, certain factors may limit farming options, for example, availability of land, labour or capital; market demand, transport facilities, and human skills. Rural physical planning must seek to alleviate constraints. Many different socio-economic and cultural processes influence farm systems, making it necessary to adapt them in order to ensure sustainability. Some of these processes and influences include:

- increasing contacts with markets, leading to higher cash needs to purchase manufactured goods and to pay for education;
- greater exposure to information via radio, television, and other mass media, leading to changes in felt needs;
- stronger integration into a commercial market system; requiring changes in kind and quality of produce and leading to dependency on markets out of the rural community for external inputs, market demand, transport, credit and services but with increased farmer self-reliance;

- population increase, which may lead to reduction in farm size on account of farm splitting and/or make it necessary to extend farming to more marginal areas; or over-exploit resources;
- labour migration, which may lead to a shortage of young people and men for farm work and which may slow down decision-making in *de facto* but not *de jure* female – headed households; and
- degradation of farming systems on account of over intensification of agriculture with negative environmental and socio-economic effects.

Objectives of the farm family

Rural physical planning must bear in mind the objectives of the farm household with respect to the process and outcome of farming. These objectives can broadly be classified as productivity, security, continuity and identity.

- Productivity is the output per unit area of land, labour, capital, time or other input. The household may not measure productivity solely in terms of market values; The household has a range of needs for consumption, health, housing, education, security and social links and obligations. Their decisions about what to produce are based not only on market demand but also on what can or cannot be obtained on the market. Specialisation in crop enterprises may not be successful. Rural households also attach a high value to an even distribution of production round the agricultural year in order to secure year-round needs and to rationalise the use of farm family labour (Figure 27).
- Seeking security means minimising the risks of production or income losses resulting from variations in ecological, economic or social processes. These variations may involve minor fluctuations, for example, weather, pests, market demand, resource accessibility, labour availability; or major disturbances caused by stress, for example, poor soils, lack of water for irrigation, indebtedness, droughts, floods, pests and diseases, a sharp rise in input prices or a fall in output prices. Farm households seek to guarantee the security in the production of subsistence goods or income. They need secure access to resources such as land, water and trees. The quest for security affects the choice of farming techniques and strategies deployed in the farm system and consequently the form of the farm dwelling. For example, in drought-prone areas such as the Sudan-Sahel region, the best surviving strategy is to keep drought-resistant animals, although they have lower production potential than other animal species or breeds. The planner should be able to apply techniques that raise productivity but reduce risks, that is, securing rights or access to resources and externalising risks (through individual and community

grain banks) may make it possible for farmers to use more productive resources and techniques.

- Farmers seek for continuity, that is, they and their children continue their way of life on their farm holdings and therefore, wish to maintain the quality and quantity of their farm plots. To ensure this continuity, they must also be able to adjust to change. The capacity to adapt to changing conditions ultimately determines the sustainability of the farming system. Vital to such adaptability is the capacity to manage farm development and to accept innovations.
- Identity is defined here as the extent to which the farm system and individual farming techniques harmonise with the local culture and the people's vision of their place in nature (Reijntjes et al., 1995). It involves aspects with personal preference, social status, cultural traditions (for example, to perform ceremonies), social norms (men's and women's roles) and spiritual satisfaction. An important aspect of a peasant's or a community's identity is self-respect. The peasant's objective of maintaining self-respect or identity embraces the criteria for sustainable agriculture defined as "social justice and humaneness". It is also related to conservation and transformation of natural resources, as the structure and form of the agrarian landscape is part of the identity of the people who live within it and exercise their influence upon it. Planners must understand that rural people usually have a strong need to identify with the local culture. History and tradition play an important role in their lives and in their ways of farming. Changes that are incompatible with their social, cultural and spiritual values can cause great stress and counterforce. A farm family's or a community's feeling of identity is maintained by technologies that permit them to be self-reliant and to control decision-making about use of local resources and products. The need for participatory planning involving local people becomes crucial for the success of development programmes.

Settlements and the farming systems

Temporary settlements: Semi-nomadism

In the savanna and Sudano-Sahelian regions of the country pastoral tribes still move with their cattle, goat and sheep, halting briefly at watering points or in flood plains and low-lying areas with a temporary supply of grazing. The Bamenda Highlands, Adamawa and Northern parts of the country exhibit semi-nomadic practices among pastoral people. The seasonal variation of climate (alternating wet and dry seasons) controls the biological rhythm, that is, variations in vegetation productivity. This is the chief influence on the pastoralist way of life. Cattle are their real wealth. Donkeys and horses carry household necessities and framework for temporary

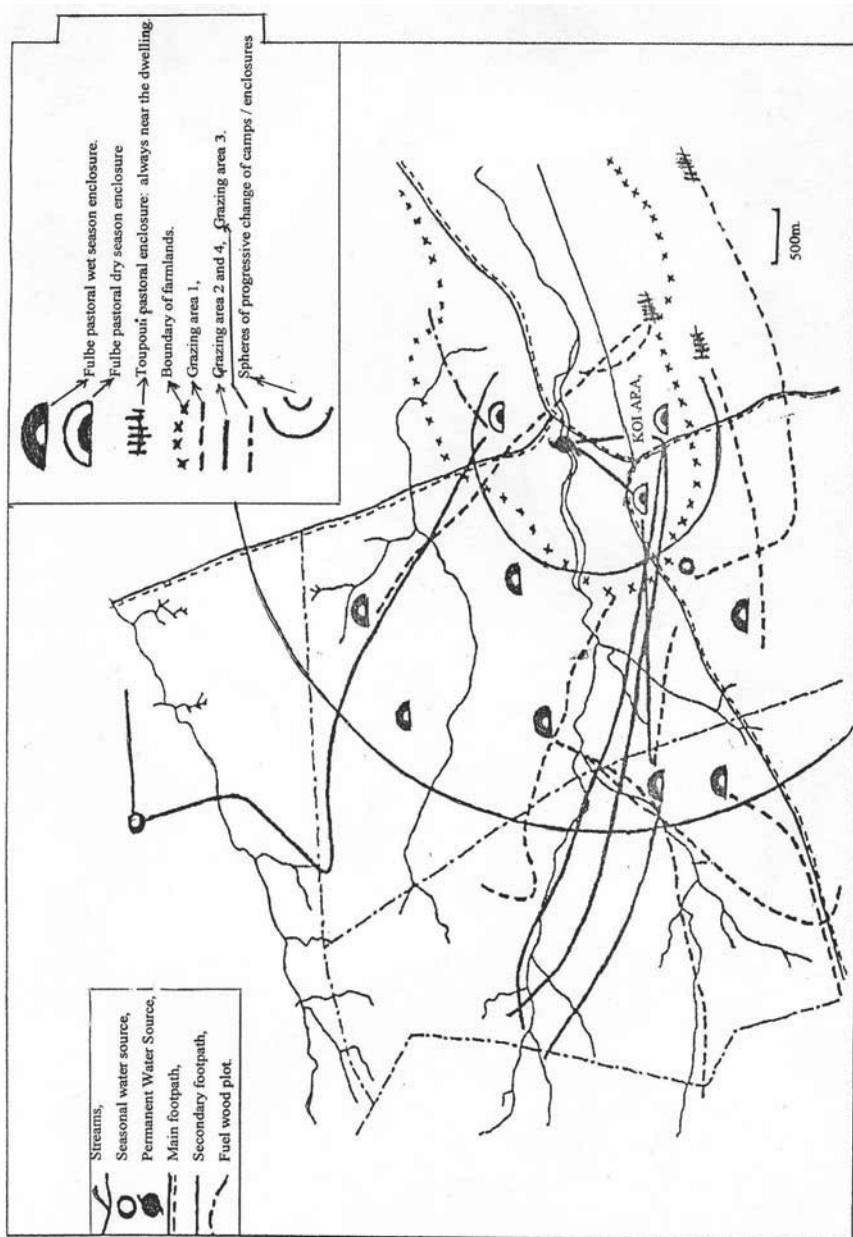


Figure 26b: Seasonal movement of cattle in Kolara: North Cameroon (after Reiss, Picard and Dioumessi *et al*; 1996)

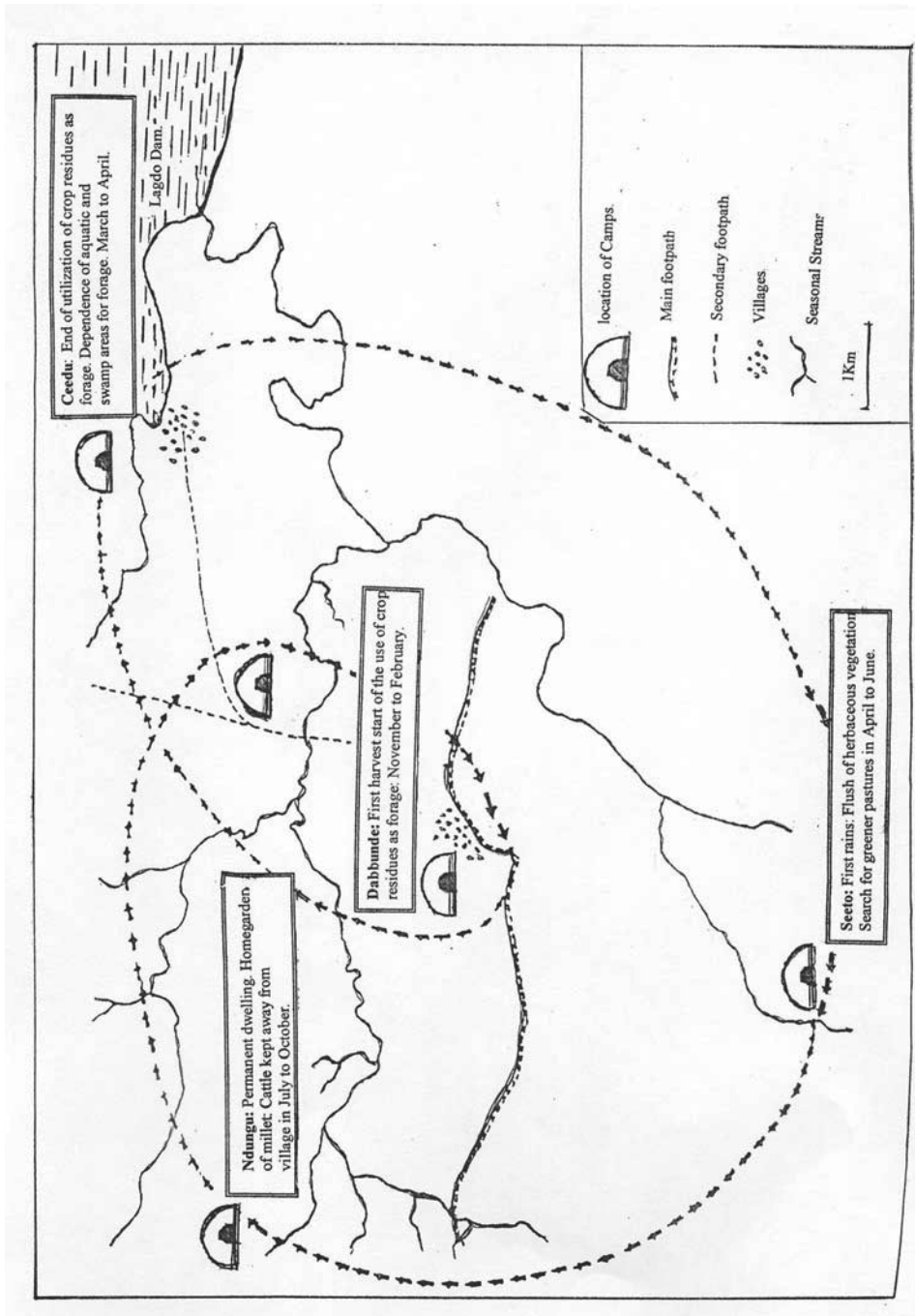


Figure 26c: Seasonal movement of cattle in Kolara: North Cameroon (after Reiss, Picard and Dioumessi *et al.* 1996)

Shifting Cultivation and Permanent Settlements

In the hot, relatively moist regions of the country, where the vegetation cover is close and regenerates rapidly, men clear the land of rainforest, woodland, or woodland-savannah for temporary cultivation, but abandon it after a few years when the soil fertility begins to be exhausted. This is a slash – and – burn shifting cultivation system. A variety of crops are then planted in the small plot usually with a light hoe. After several years of cultivation the soil fertility drops and plots are then abandoned and revert to secondary growth. The cultivators move on and clear elsewhere. Settlement under this condition is again of a temporary nature. Housing and storages are of simple local materials.

However, in time, other factors may lead to more permanent settlement within the territorial limits of the group of cultivators. Tracks may come to be used as recognised trade routes and become incentives for settlement as dwellings concentrate along the line of the “road”. A type of agriculture involving some kind of land rotation may then evolve, eventually leading to more permanent settlement. These evolutionary pathways and interactions are presented in Figure 27.

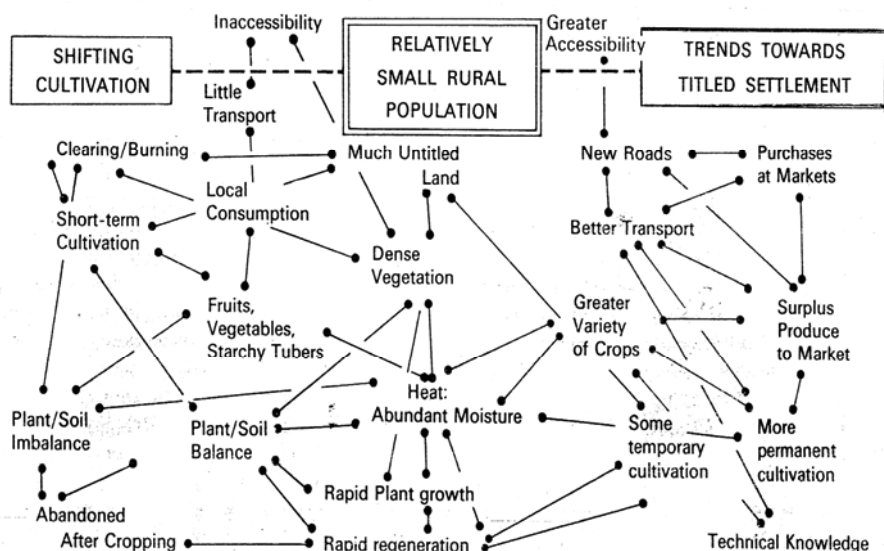


Figure 27a: Shifting cultivation showing the evolution of factors and tendency towards titled land-holdings.

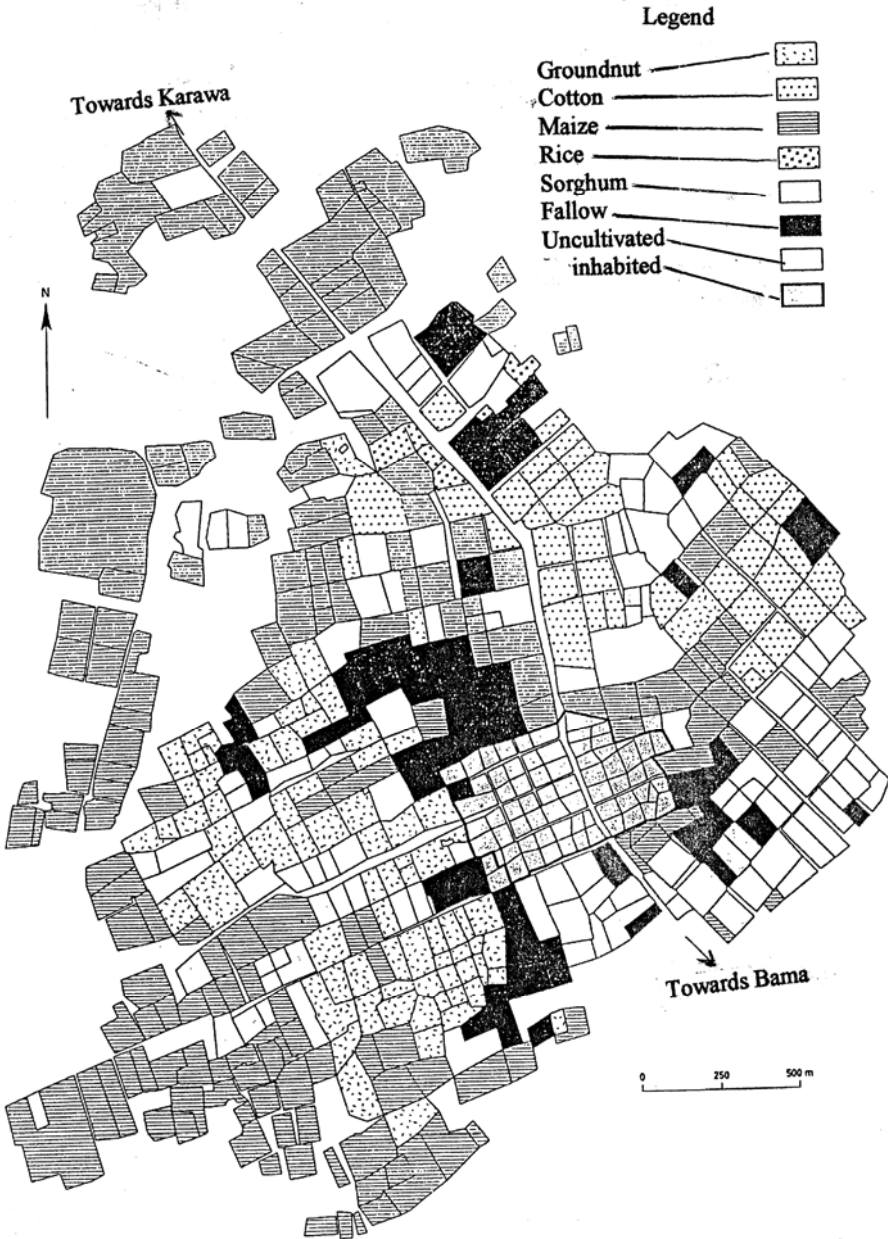


Figure 27b: Land use in Wuro-Labbo village in 1992 (after Seignobos and Mandjek, 1992), Far North Region of Cameroon: Shifting cultivation with fallows showing trends towards titled land.

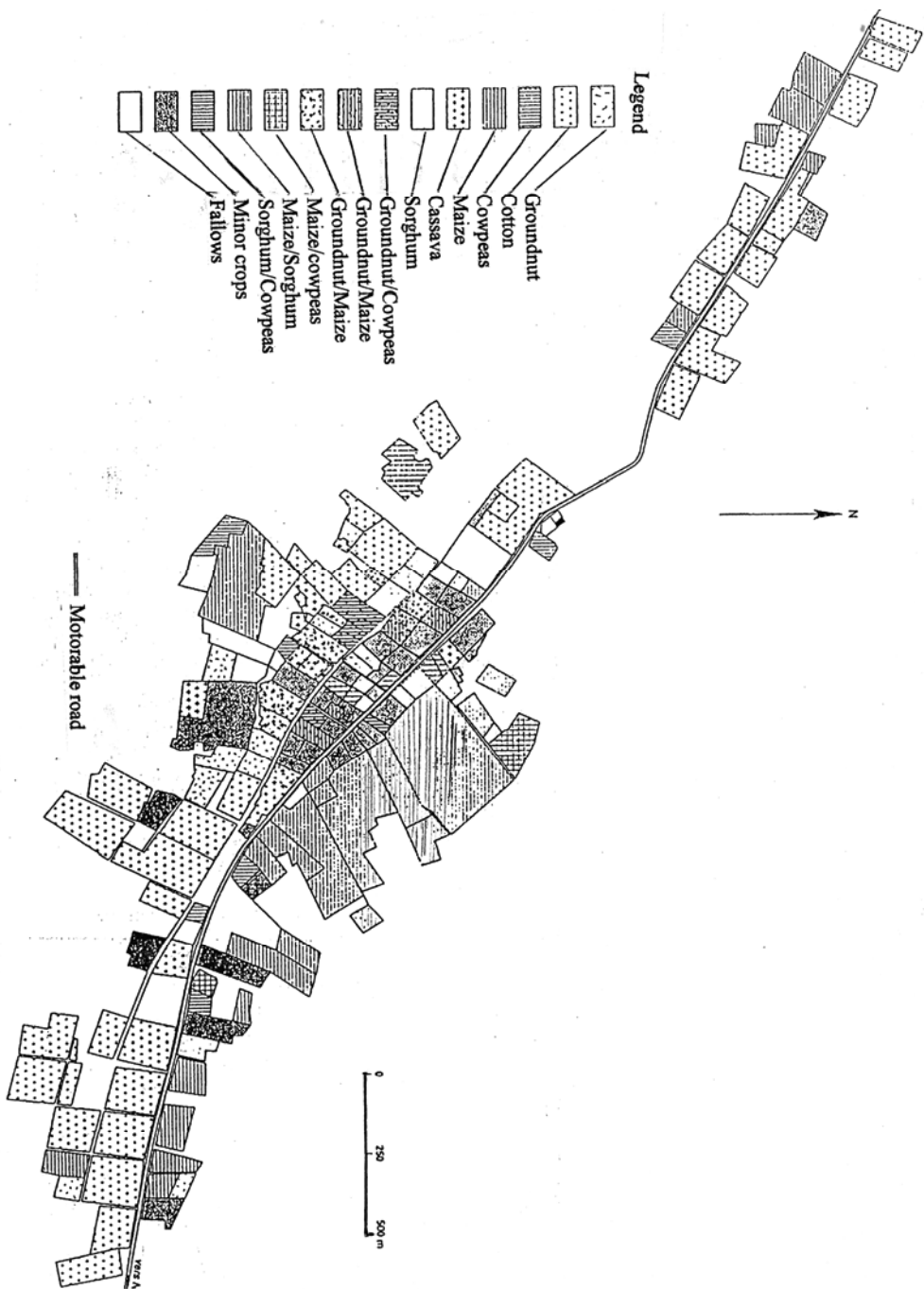


Figure 27c: Linear settlement and Land use in Hore-Kado village (after Mandjek and Seignobos) Far North Region of Cameroon: Shifting cultivation and permanent settlements; tendency towards permanent cultivation.

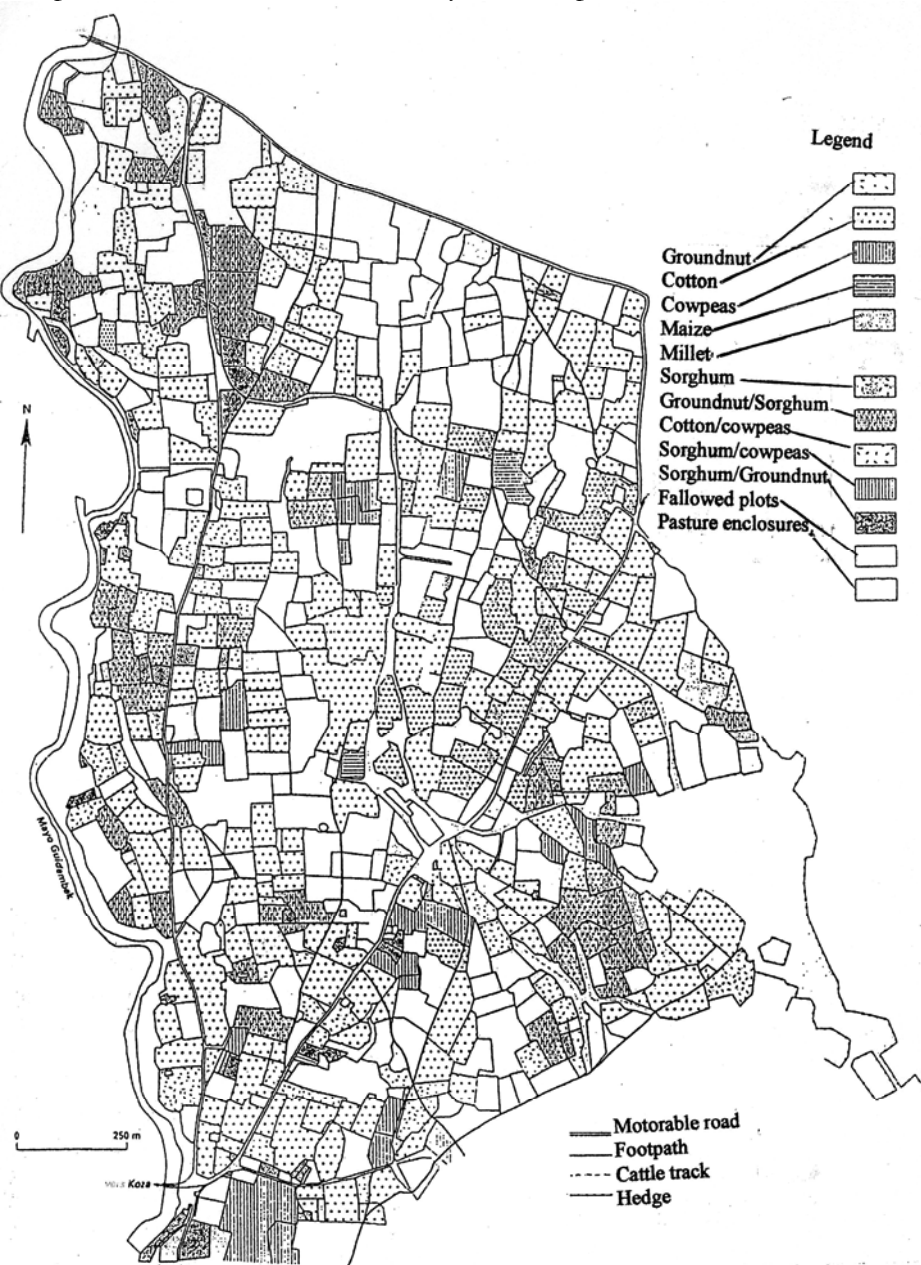


Figure 27d: Landuse in Dakotcher village in 1992. (after Mandjek and Seignobas, 1972) Far North Region of Cameroon: Fallow system.

With time there will be trends towards titled settlements. This is the evolutionary stage in most village communities in the country which are being influenced by access to modern markets, technical knowledge and basic socio-economic infrastructure. The quality of rural life can greatly be ameliorated by organising rural people to provide these basic needs.

Subsistence farming with settled tillage

Permanent village settlements are farmed by families who practise bush fallowing in order to reconstitute the soil nutrient status. The harvest is mainly for family consumption. Surpluses are for sale. Individual families strive to grow a variety of foods according to the region. Houses and separate small food-stores are usually of local materials. Agricultural tools are simple – the most common is the broad semi-circular iron hoe, fixed to a wooden handle. Many sell surplus food, but it is difficult to distinguish purely subsistence family farming from profit-seeking smallholders. Much depends on the time devoted to producing cash crops. Figure 28 presents the various interacting factors in subsistence farming.

Commercial Plantation farming and settlements

These plantations were established to provide tropical commodities to European countries. These are found in Loum, Njombe, the Mount Cameroon region, Ndian, Kribi, Eseka, Edea and most of the Littoral and South Cameroon Plateau. Much labour is needed to prepare, harvest and process produce for export. They engage cheap manual labour for the production of rubber, oil palm, tea and bananas. These are agro-industrial plantations with large-scale production. Much capital is required – for clearing, drainage, irrigation, road construction, water supply, vehicles, power, housing, schools, and hospitals. The overall pattern of settlement is huge areas of monoculture, amid which are large central buildings, processing plant, housing of managerial staff, and clustered “lines” of labour dwellings. In some cases labour comes from nearby “satellite” villages. Figure 29 is a simplification of the items of outlay and income involved in a plantation system of farming employing managerial staff and indigenous labour. This does not take into account the complex political and social problems which are apt to arise in this type of organisation (Money, 1975).

In conclusion, Cameroon has diverse geographical circumstances and rural settlement forms related to its biogeography, and ethnic diversity. This has yielded several agro-ecological zones and, therefore, rural land use systems or farming systems. In order for them to be sustainable, farm systems must generate a level of production that satisfies the material (productivity) and social (identity) needs of the farm family, within certain margins of security and without long-term depletion. As the objectives of

security, continuity and identity usually compete with immediate productivity, an optimal instead of a maximum level of productivity has to be sought in order to ensure sustainability of the farm system. This is site-specific. Farm systems are dynamic – responding to conditions of farming and needs of the farm family with time. Systems that survive are in constant adjustment to change. Planners must, therefore, carefully evaluate the viability of present systems in terms of their economic, ecological and socio-political sustainability, and available alternatives must be assessed in the same way. In this way the peasant and the community will begin to recognise the extent to which their specific objectives and ways of achieving them can be matched with current technical opportunities and limitations. Outsiders can support rural communities in the process by strengthening their capacity to assess their situation, to develop new technologies and to adapt their farm systems in a participative planning process. Steps should be taken to give more planning responsibilities to the district administrators in order to define their priorities to be considered in sector plans and investment plans. A key institution at the regional level should be the creation of a Regional Planning Unit. This unit should secure the link to the district administrations and to the central government. Sector Investment Plans (SIP) must have strong linkages to comprehensive district plans. Such plans are approved by the district assembly.

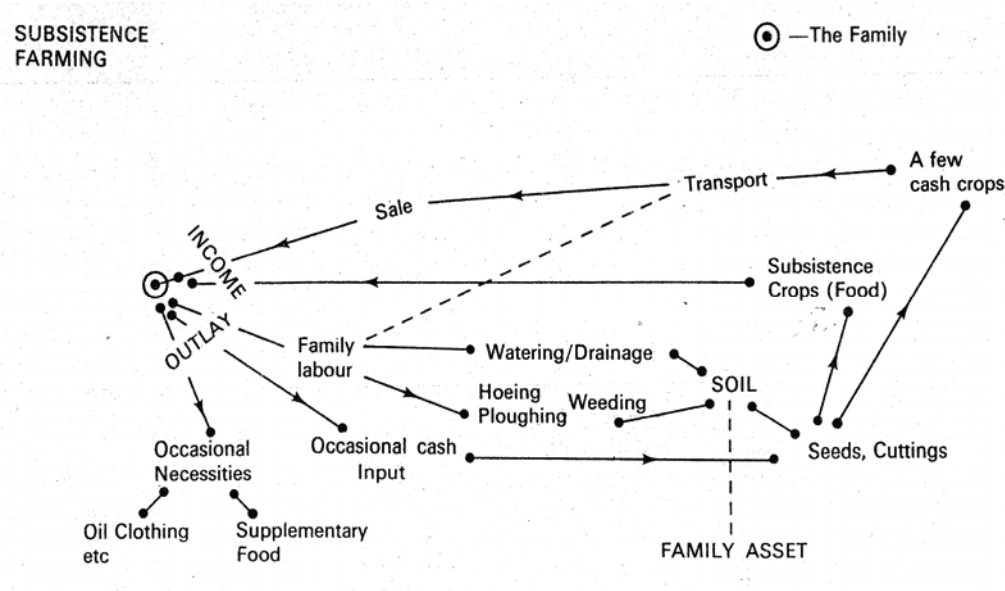


Figure 28: Subsistence farming organisation and inter-related factors which interact to make peasants attached to the land as an asset.

PLANTATION FARMING

⊙ —The Owners

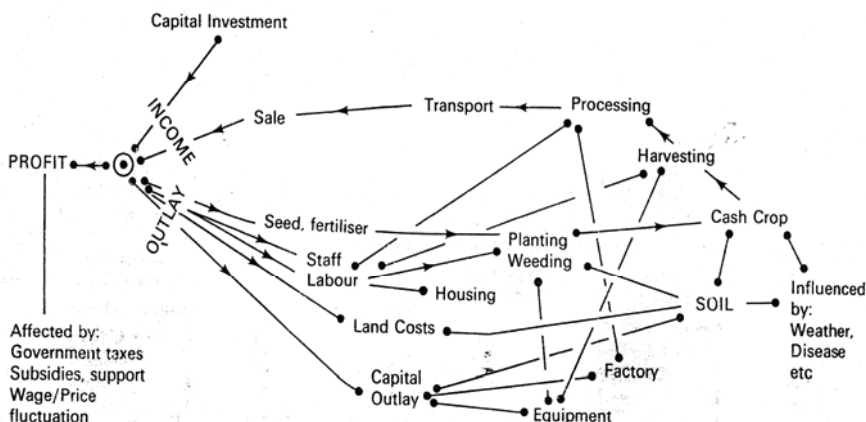


Figure. 29a: Items of outlay and income in plantation farming. Workers are settled in camps within estates. Model of agro-industrial plantations (e.g. Cameroon Development Corporation and HEVECAM).

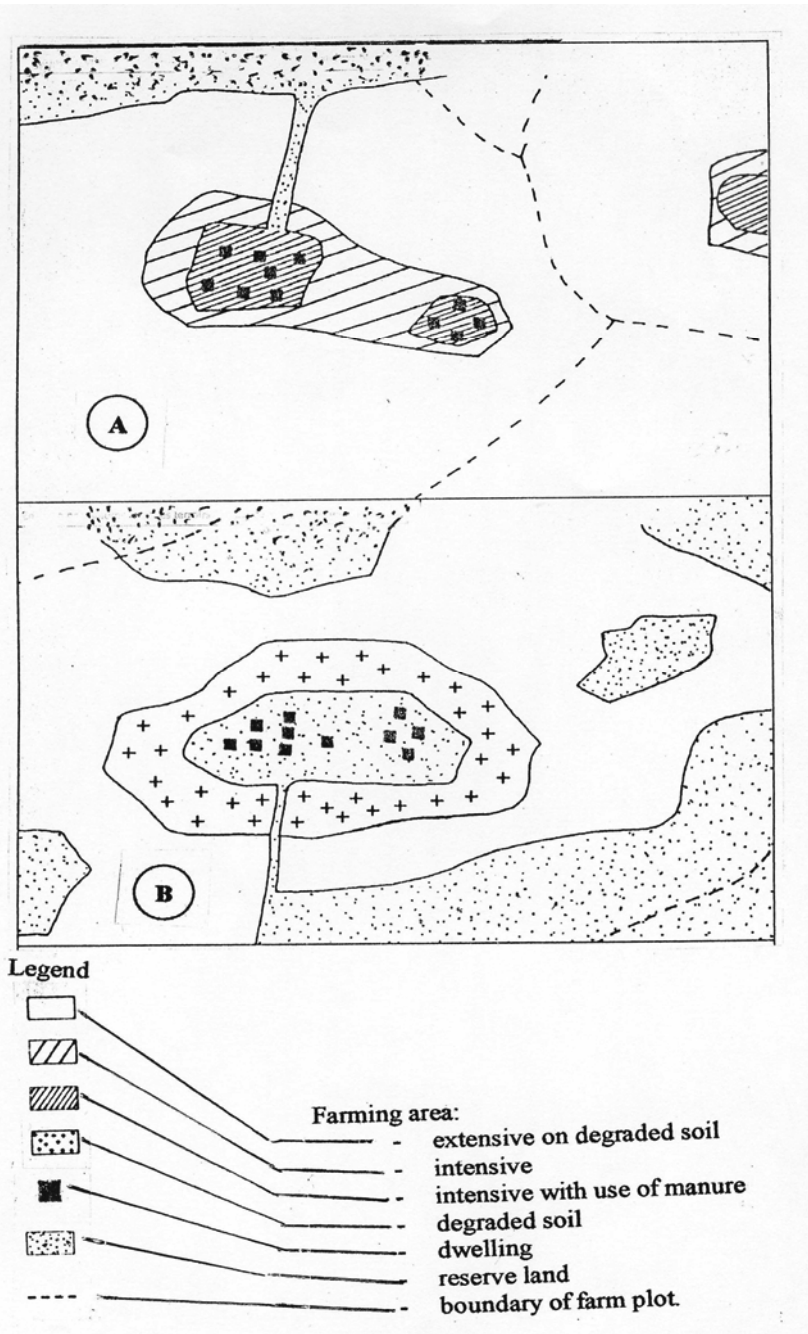


Figure 29b: Land use in cotton production zones of North Cameroon: (a) Moundang and Toupouri landscape, (b) Ngong Landscape in the South of Garoua (after Dugue; Koulandi and Moussa, 1996). Smallholder systems with nucleus factory under SODECOTON.



Plate 21: Cotton oil factory in Maroua. The cotton is cultivated on smallholding in rural areas under a Parastatal project that links farmers to a nucleus factory. A textile industry is located in Garoua town.



Plate 22: Picking cotton in a rural area in the Far North Region for the textile factory in Garoua town and cotton oil factory in Maroua town: an important rural-urban linkage. Smallholder system under SODECOTON.



Plate 23: Cocoa pods after harvesting in the rainforest regions. Cocoa is an important cash / export crop for small holders. Like coffee, price fluctuations on the world market frustrate farmers' efforts.



Plate 24: Picking coffee beans. Arabica coffee is the main export crop of the West and North West Regions cultivated around hamlets.



Plate 25: Agro-industrial oil palm plantation and nursery in the South West Region. These plantations promote smallholder farming of industrial crops for processing in a nucleus factory. Generally organization is based on estates.

Chapter Four

Rural Settlement-Spatial Development Planning

At the beginning of this new millennium the population distribution of Cameroon is almost 40% urban and 60% rural. These proportions at this historical juncture present a timely opportunity to revisit a question that has occupied spatial planners for most of the past century: Can rural-urban linkages be promoted in a way that benefits both urban and rural areas? More specifically, can both the town and the countryside progress in a reciprocal manner in rural regions?

The rural and urban dichotomy

In Cameroon, the gap in life chances between the rapidly growing cities and the rural areas are huge. While the countryside provides food and natural resources for the city, it is also where poverty and hunger is most pronounced. Rural regions continue to be characterised by relatively low incomes, over specialisation in a few commodities, environmental degradation and chronic out-migration. In the 1990s the poverty line in Cameroon was defined to include as poor all households whose annual per capita consumption (food and non-food commodities) is at or below consumption level of 78.000 francs CFA. The extent of poverty is spreading. It now affects up to 70% of the rural population and up to 30% of the urban population. The percentage of rural households below the poverty line rose from about 39% in 1983 to about 71% in 1993. Rural poverty continued to increase because producers prices for cash and food crops declined resulting in up to 60% declines in rural incomes between 1983 and 1993 (Anon; 1995).

Conditions of poverty in rural and urban areas are quite different just as they may differ from one region to another. On the basis of social indicators such as housing, illiteracy and malnutrition, the sparsely populated regions of the forest zones (South and East Regions) have the highest incidence of poverty, but the greatest numbers of poor people are concentrated in the densely populated arid and semi-arid regions in the North and Far North Regions. Poverty incidence tends to be lowest in the coastal area around the Douala metropolitan region, the West and South West Regions of the country. The period between 1985 and 1993 was one of rapid impoverishment in Cameroon. During this period cash crop farmers were probably hardest hit by the fall in prices in the wake of international price declines in the mid 1980s. For cocoa and robusta coffee, the two leading export crops, prices plunged by 46% and 74% respectively. With the decline in the value of agricultural output and deterioration of the rural/urban terms of trade, the incidence of poverty in rural areas in 1993 was likely to have been 71% of the population. Due to increasing rural poverty the economies

of rural regions are now sites for the reproduction of cheap labour for urban recruitment, with migrant remittances becoming principal sources of rural household income maintenance.

At the same time the large cities and the two main metropolitan regions (Douala and Yaoundé) are experiencing severe congestion, environmental stress and their own forms of poverty in slum and squatter settlements. With the future sufficiency of food security in question, the portent of rising food prices for rapidly growing urban populations also suggests that without steady increases in agricultural productivity and production, cities and towns will have potentially serious problems of deepening poverty and social discontent. The rural conditions needed to sustain towns and cities are just not inefficient, that is, cities and towns depend on the vitality of agriculture and the regional conditions needed to support it. Viewed from a more positive perspective, the potential complementarities between urban and rural activities are manifold. Just as rural producers need urban markets for their products and for convenience of shopping for higher order household consumption, urban areas equally need rural areas for supplies of food, energy, water, fibre, cheap labour and markets. Rising farm incomes will certainly stimulate the growth of rural settlements. This will in turn be translated into higher levels of household consumption of urban goods and services. Similarly, town market centres for agricultural commodities both serve and depend upon the vitality of rural production.

Despite the obvious synergies to be gained from rural – urban linkages, their potential is not being realised. The reasons are many:

- central planning carried out by sectoral bureaux in various ministries is generally insensitive to the need to spatially co-ordinate decision-making. There is a deep divide between urban planning which is mostly industrial in its orientation and inward-looking in its concerns, and rural planning, which still tends to view planning, as a spatial agricultural sector issue
- the rural and urban dimensions of spatial planning are firmly disconnected from each other in policy and planning.

False presumptions

Douglars (2000) outlined a number of false presumptions. This false dichotomy is further exacerbated by presumptions held by spatial planners about processes of rural regional development. These include the belief that the city develops the countryside, and that by investing in cities and promoting stronger physical connections between town and countryside via road and transportation trunk lines, rural settlements and farms will automatically prosper. This, in turn, has reduced rural development to a kind of public works technocracy that obfuscates vital needs for better sectoral

development policies and local capacity-building. It also disguises the deeper power relations being played out over space between rural and urban-based interests.

Given the inappropriate policy models adopted over past decades, the record shows a number of undesirable consequences:

- Chronic out-migration of the younger rural labour causing acute shortages and declining capacity to pass farms on to younger generations;
- Loss of prime rural land and weakening of common property or other traditional land-use management systems;
- Lack of coherent land-use planning, especially at the rural-urban interface of expanding metropolitan regions, resulting in environmental degradation;
- Few local multiplier effects needed to stimulate agro-industry and non-agricultural job creation in the region;
- Limited or stagnant *in situ* urbanisation in rural regions away from metropolises;
- Disintegration of local cultural relations and institutions, especially in hill and mountain regions where smaller-scale societies have long engaged in extensive agricultural practices;
- Overly specialised rural economies that experience debilitating “boom-bust” economic swings.

All of these outcomes underlie a common pattern of rural decline and the polarisation of development in a few mega-urban regions with national development. Mainstream regional theorists view the polarisation of development, including rural out-migration, as a desirable process that moves low productivity rural labour to more efficient large urban agglomerations. The impacts noted above reveal, however, that more is at stake than short-term economic efficiency. As the recent economic crisis in Asia has shown, the long-term loss of resilience of rural regions leaves entire nations unable to absorb the pauperising consequences of urban-industrial meltdowns.

The overall scope for increasing agricultural productivity and rural commodity marketing efficiency is outlined below. There is need to promote rural-urban market dependencies in five key sectors:

- Agricultural trade and transport services;
- Agricultural production support services (input delivery channels to be revitalised).
- Basic socio-economic services (non-agricultural consumer markets);
- Development of agro-based industries for the transformation of rural produce; and

- Promotion of non-agricultural employment in both rural and urban areas as a basic sector for employing the landless people and to reduce pressure on limited land resources.

Table 2: Urban – Rural Market Interdependence

SCOPE FOR INCREASING EFFICIENCY	URBAN ← RURAL →
	* Agricultural Trade and Transport Centre Agricultural production Food Wood and fuel Fibre
	* Agricultural Support * Agricultural Intensification Input - Rural infrastructure Repairs services - Production incentives Extension - Education + capacity to adopt Innovations and adapt innovations.
	* Non-agricultural * Rural income and demand for consumer markets non-agricultural goods and services Processed agricultural products Private services Public services (health, administration, education)
	* Agro-based industries * Cash crop production and agricultural diversification
	* Non-agricultural industries * Agriculture as basic sector for Employment

Towards sustainable rural economies and livelihoods

At the same time that rural economies are increasingly globalised, local variations in natural endowments and capacities are profound. The potential for rural-urban linkages to promote rural development thus greatly depends on their capacity to account for these variations in a manner that promotes a reciprocal process of rural-urban integration and exchange (Table 2). The promotion of these links goes beyond spatial dimensions to cover (Douglass, 2000):

- Land tenure and farming systems policies to increase the productivity of labour and land in agriculture, to curtail extensive expansion of production, to secure an environmentally sustainable use of natural resources, and to avoid the downward spiral of ageing farm families and farmland abandonment.
 - Credit and assistance for land purchase, exchange and leasing to consolidate fragmented land holdings and keeping good agricultural land in production;
 - Enhancing the quality of agricultural land;
 - Promoting social forestry and other environmental management approaches toward natural resource management

- Producer organisations to enhance co-operative efforts and bargaining positions by:
 - Supporting group farming to overcome labour shortages, economise on machine purchases and inputs, and encourage risk-sharing in innovation;
 - Promoting small-scale producer, credit and marketing co-operatives operated by the members themselves but with possible government and/or NGOs facilitation;
 - Forming business leagues to promote regional products, promote mutual learning for technological innovation, and assist in negotiations between local and extra-local enterprises;
 - Organising training programmes in basic accounting and business administration, including legal aspects of, e.g., contract farming agreements.
- Decentralisation and Governance to build inclusive political processes capable of drawing upon local knowledge and social energies for diversifying and sustaining rural economies by:
 - Transferring government powers to local authorities, including autonomous revenue sources and sufficient numbers and quality of personnel;
 - Making government accountable to local constituencies through democratic institutions and direct participation in project selection for rural development;
 - Establishing regional level planning councils having joint representation of central and regional levels to better integrate national perspectives and resources with local level potentials and priorities.
- Economic diversification and upstream-downstream linkages to build more economically resilient rural economies by:
 - Working toward a “multiple sectorisation of agriculture” by promoting research and development for innovation in production processes, products and product design, and marketing;
 - Identifying regional potential at the “micro-scale” through village and district level reconnaissance on existing and new economic activities with significant promise;
 - Creating education and youth programmes to ensure incorporation of local knowledge in devising innovative changes in production and marketing;
 - Assisting in localising upstream/downstream linkages through, e.g., man power training in linked industries and support for

start-up of new firms as suppliers for basic agricultural and manufacturing industries;

- Creating two-way information systems that include dissemination of local knowledge and viewpoints along with outside knowledge and information using popular media such as radio and television.

Building Regional Networks for Innovation Diffusion in rural areas

Sectoral and institutional development policies require a spatial counterpart to effect them. In continuing to draw inspiration from urban and industrial diffusion models, conventional approaches to regional planning have proven to be inadequate for this task. Even the minor tradition extolling the role of small towns in rural development, which is derived from central place theories, maintains a strong urban bias and does not match the realities of rural regions. The potential of modern transportation and communications technologies to allow for less hierarchical patterns of interaction as well as substantial differentiation among settlements of the same population size classes are grossly underestimated by these models.

Rather than continuing to promote rigid models of urban hierarchies that are assumed to trickle development down to rural hinterlands, an approach that is more reflective of actual as well as potential patterns of spatial interaction would recognise that variations in economic activities in rural regions are much more complex and diverse than perceived models allow. It would further acknowledge that agriculture transformations taking place over the past three decades indicate a high potential for it to retain vitality as a regional economic base for diversifying local economies. It would, in other words, turn toward a less hierarchical network approach toward regional planning. Complementing the sectoral and institutional development elements summarised above, the principal components of a regional network strategy would include:

- Local feeder roads and bridges in addition to trunk highway systems to ensure frequent and accessible linkages among all settlements in the regions;
- Expanded transportation services, including high frequency, low fare Public buses, that link villages with villages as well as with main urban centres;
- Key urban functions that respond to hinterland needs instead, rather than standard functions for each city rank;
- Greatly expanded rural as well as urban infrastructure and services, including off-farm improvements in shared infrastructure for irrigation, storage and marketing; and equipment and farm input procurement.

A network of well connected and highly interactive rural and urban settlements would also be better able than a single industrial or urban growth pole to provide a high level of agglomeration and economic diversity to act as an antipode to core metropolitan regions. Given the reduction of time distances among settlements now possible, somewhat dispersed towns and villages can be linked together to form an effective range of daily interaction that would have been impossible only a decade or two ago. The intention of a regional network strategy is to create a complex rural-urban field of urban activities, with growth stimuli emanating from both rural and urban areas. It is advocated as a framework that is more suited to bringing elements of rural and urban development together for the long-term development of non-metropolitan regions. This is presented in the model (see Figure 30). In contrast to the urban-industrial model, this approach does not rely on a single centre to lead regional growth. Rather, relations among centres are multi-directional, including strengthened horizontal connectivity in contrast to dendritic urban hierarchy models that focus only on vertical linkages.

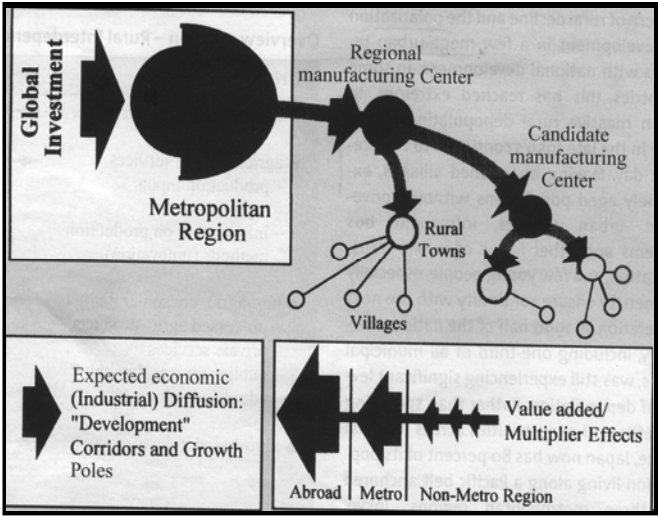


Figure 30: Model of industrial decentralization from the core area to the peripheral areas. (Rural towns and villages)

Table 3: Comparison of industrial diffusion and regional network models

Dimension	Urban-Industrial Diffusion Model	Regional Network Model
1. Basic sector	Urban-based manufacturing: usually focuses on large-scale “propulsive” industries and “footloose” production units headquartered outside the region.	All sectors, depending on local regional endowments and conditions; emphasis on local small-medium size regionally-based enterprises
2. Urban system	Hierarchical, centred on a single dominant centre, usually identified by population size and associated with the assumption of central place theory.	Horizontal, composed of a number of centres and their hinterlands, each with own specialisations and comparative advantages.
3. Rural-urban relations	Image of diffusion processes moving down the urban hierarchy and outward from the city/town to its rural periphery. Rural areas as passive beneficiaries of “trickle-down” from urban growth.	Image of a complex rural-urban field of activities, with growth stimuli emanating from both rural and urban areas and with the intensity increasing along regional inter-settlement transportation corridors.
4. Planning style	Usually top-down via sectoral planning agencies and their field offices. Regions have “misty” boundaries determined by economic interaction.	Implies the need for decentralised planning systems, with integration and co-ordination of multi-sectoral and rural and urban activities at the local level.
5. Major policy areas	Industrial decentralisation incentives: tax holidays, industrial estates, national transportation trunk roads.	Agricultural diversification, agro-industry, resource-based manufacturing, urban services, manpower training, local inter-settlement transportation networks.

The government of Cameroon has adopted spatial development strategies such as regional planning and service centre approaches for balance regional development. These broadly conform to administrative units. The large units are regions. A region is composed of divisions and each division is divided into sub divisions. The regional capital is the regional market and service centre while the divisional and sub divisional (district) head quarters represent urban and semi-urban markets and service centres. At the village level are rural markets. Unfortunately, the strategies have not focused on market town development and there is limited information on market access studies. The functions of the divisional and sub divisional or district authorities need to cover a wide range of activities from development control to enhancing local economic activity. Such planning activities should include a fairly equitable provision of social services, education, schools, health,

market places, environmental and disaster management contingency plans. Unfortunately present policies are sectoral and key issues for an integrated rural development are far from sight:

- Output – oriented programmes in remote districts in an integrated manner;
- Gradual implementation of socio-economic infrastructure development;
- Mobilisation of special resources from government to tackle the peculiar problems of rural areas.
- Motivating the inhabitants of remote districts to identify their needs, and to formulate an entrepreneurship development, income generation at village level, participation of women in awareness building activities, identification and development of cultural and eco-tourism and conservation of biodiversity.
- Formulating and implementing development plans based on the identification of possibilities in remote districts.

The planners and decision-makers at the divisional and regional level are confronted with a myriad of *ad hoc* decisions due to the acute absence of data necessary to support the planning and management activities of areas they govern. Analogue and digital maps of rural districts covering land capability, land systems, land utilisation and soils at a scale of 1:50.000 are lacking in most instances. Each division and its sub division or district should be a spatial planning as well as an administrative unit that takes into account its specificities. There is need to establish detailed data sets at different spatial units.

In this context different hierarchical levels of the market towns in each administrative division should be identified and established because these are the gateways for the dissemination of external influences to the rural population. Such towns can then be linked to regional and national market networks as transport and communication facilities and other basic services improve. Determination of levels of agricultural development for each district is required in order for deployment of the type of agri-services as per its development level. Agricultural development in a district is the product of a combination of several factors. Mountain districts for example, have different levels or types of potential agricultural development and therefore some of them may require the same type of level of agricultural development services while others not. This type of exercise can help decide for proper investment according to the need of the district, that is, right amount of investment for right type of agri-services. The level of agricultural development in relative terms for instance, high, moderate, poor or very poor can be obtained through applying a very simple appropriate technique

such as principal component analysis. Geographical Information System (GIS) can also be used to portray the levels of agricultural development in terms of graphical output. This requires a resource evaluation and analysis of all districts.

Agricultural development and related parameters

The following parameters that relate to agricultural development directly and indirectly can be considered for determination of development levels of agriculture (Rural Resource Inventory Elements):

- Cultivated areas
- Irrigated area
- Main crop
- Agricultural employment
- Extension service
- Livestock population
- Rural credit institutions
- Road length
- Veterinary service
- Number of markets
- Health services
- Fertiliser use
- Pesticide use
- Literacy
- Cottage industries

Apart from the above parameters, population size and area of the district can be considered as basic elements to show relationships.

Information is essential for effective planning and decision-making of agricultural sector development. It requires a comprehensive repository of information base. Spatial agricultural planning needs information on existing basic data profile of ecological zones in order to determine agricultural districts as spatial framework for designing agricultural infrastructure and socio-economic facilities. The spatial data sets for agricultural development can be categorised into three spatial levels: district, sub district (including village development committees and municipalities or local councils), and settlement.

District level data sets

- Agricultural district boundary
- Topography
- Soil type and soil properties
- Drainage system and water availability

- Agro-climate conditions
- Forest type (structure and composition and degree of degradation and volume)
- Pasture (distribution, and spatial extent)
- Land use pattern: components (agricultural land, forest area, national parks and reserves, pasture, unused/barren land, common land, bad land, roads, water bodies, hazard area, and land systems.
- Major roads/trails
- Irrigation type and network.

Village level data sets

- Village boundary
- General land use
- Agricultural data: cultivated area, fallow land, cropping pattern, production, consumption and amounts of inputs used.
- Land use history
- Land capabilities
- Irrigation potentials
- Animal husbandry and potential
- Marketing system: flow of rural products, periodic markets
- Road types
- Population distribution, density, growth, structure, sex, migration, and occupational structure.
- Socio-political structure
- Development Organisation

Settlement level data sets

- Settlement: location, size, functions, growth
- Health: type and location
- School: location and level, training centres, craft centres.
- Cottage industries: location, type, capital investment, employment, production, distribution
- Roads and transport services
- Drinking water supply
- Access to financial institutions
- Extension service: location and type

Once the data sets at different spatial levels are made effective planning and decision-making for the agricultural sector development can then be possible.

Planning for rural development

It was noted that the country has the principal more developed urban areas or core in Yaounde, Douala and Limbe. The rest of the country is a less developed area or periphery. The main growth poles in this periphery are administrative towns. The rural periphery supplies food, energy and raw materials to the population and factories in the core. Rural – urban exodus from the rural periphery to Yaounde, Douala and the towns in the Mount Cameroon region is alarming. The core areas offer enormous employment opportunities as well as socio-economic infrastructure that are lacking in the periphery.

Because of the spiral of growth in the core areas making them more attractive to new industries and to youths from the rural periphery, it becomes very much more difficult to attract new industries into the peripheral areas of the country (which can help them to be more prosperous). The rapid depopulation and stagnation of development in the periphery obliges one to conclude that the core areas grow at the expense of the peripheral areas; since they attract all the industry. Some planners think that the peripheral areas are so unattractive to industry that rather than locate there, firms would prefer to locate in another country altogether.

Much of the development that has taken place in the peripheral areas tends to be centred on administrative towns (regional, divisional and sub divisional or district head quarters). These chiefly have some advantage in terms of commerce, the service sector and existing cottage industries and food processing mills. These are minor growth poles with very little magnetic force to attract new industries. These slow growth poles and the core areas contrast greatly with the rural hinterlands in terms of development. It appears that Cameroon has chosen to use administrative headquarters or towns as growth poles in her peripheral areas. Most of these administrative towns do not suit the idea of growth poles. To be successful a growth pole must have some kind of resources, either in the form of minerals or agricultural products suitable for raw materials for industry, or a concentration of population. Growth poles should be located where there is the most potential but not necessarily the greatest need for development.

One of the ways in which the government can help develop the periphery is through spatial rural development planning. There is need to re-institute the Five-Year Plans of the 1960s to 1980s in this new context. These should guide spatial plans and budgets set for rural development in the context of the decentralisation of decision-making and the building up of democratic structures by central government in partnership with civil society and the grassroots population. The main problem of the government will definitely be the one of deciding which section of the economy to concentrate on. Some geographers think that in most rural areas the

government should concentrate on the expansion of cottage industries. Even if the government does decide on developing cottage industries first, so that products can be exported to the core areas, there is the argument as to whether this should be in the form of small scale village industries or large-scale organised industries.

Other advisers argue that the most pressing need is to improve agriculture. This can be done by setting up advisory centres in villages, giving agricultural grants and loans for buying good seeds and appropriate farm equipment, and by re-organising land holdings and farms to be more efficient. Irrigation is also particularly important for most of the agroecological zones of the country. Others have argued that before any industry can be set up at the periphery, rural power stations must be built, for modern industry cannot run without a power supply; the consumption of electricity is one of the ways in which development is measured. Yet the government rural electrification programme started in the 1990s is still a pipe-dream. The government on the other hand has undertaken the improvement of rural transport and communications as an urgent need – hence, she launched the farm-to-market road project a decade ago for the benefit of both industry and agriculture. Unfortunately, most of the peripheral areas are enclaved and are inaccessible to food commodity markets. The problems of development in the country have been compounded by the ongoing economic depression that started in the mid 1980s. Both rural and urban poverty have been deepening. When conditions in both town and countryside are frequently miserable, poverty is so common and disease such a problem that money must be spent to provide for hospitals and social services. In most instances, such actions benefit the core areas and the growth poles thereby increasing the rural – urban dichotomy and hence the rural urban exodus. There is a need to reduce the rural – urban dichotomy, to promote industrial decentralisation (See Figure 30) through building regional networks for innovation diffusion from the core to the periphery and to promote urban – rural market interdependence (Figure 31).

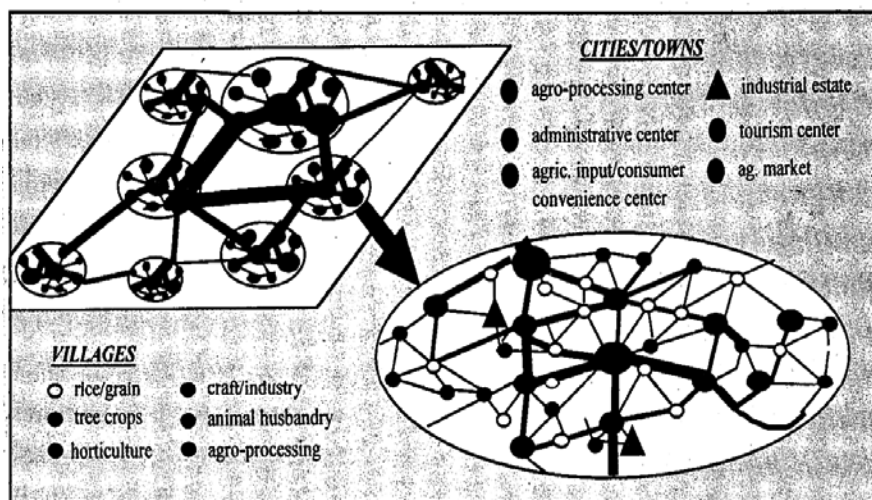


Figure 31: Regional network model showing rural urban linkages.

Urbanisation and Rural – Urban Exodus

Since independence, Cameroon has experienced economic progress and in particular industrial advancement is now dynamic. This has accelerated the growth of urban populations to the disadvantage of the countryside. The towns have the advantage of declining mortality rates, which allows them to expand by natural increase as well as by rural – urban migration.

What do rural people seek when they migrate into the town? Besides employment and material progress, they expect better educational provision, more medical care and more amusement, access to electric light and freedom from the drudgery and monotony of country life. Uncontrolled population growth and diminishing access to key production assets and job opportunities in overpopulated rural areas force people to migrate from the rural to urban areas. There, too, jobs are seldom available. For these rapidly growing number of migrants, the town becomes a poverty trap, not an oasis of economic opportunity and cultural diversity. The urban poor are forced to live on streets or crowd into shanty towns.

Table 4: Urbanisation in Cameroon by Region

Regions	Percentage of total population								
Year	1976	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Adamawa	25.08	22.43	22.54	22.64	22.75	22.86	22.96	23.07	23.17
Centre	27.62	47.82	48.92	50.02	51.12	52.22	53.32	54.42	55.51
East	20.66	23.31	23.65	23.99	24.33	24.67	25.02	25.36	25.71
Far North	8.91	10.07	10.18	10.29	10.40	10.51	10.63	10.74	109.85
Littoral	75.13	79.70	80.26	80.81	81.34	81.87	82.38	28.88	83.37
North	20.99	17.58	17.62	17.69	17.74	17.80	17.85	17.91	17.97
North West	14.97	16.81	17.08	17.35	17.62	17.90	18.18	18.46	18.94*
West	12.43	26.43	26.84	27.26	27.69	28.11	28.54	28.97	19.41
South	17.62	24.52	25.14	25.77	26.41	27.06	27.72	28.39	29.07
South West	32.28	43.25	43.97	44.68	45.39	40.11	46.82	47.53	48.24
Cameroon	28.52	34.33	35.13	36.14	36.96	37.28	38.59	39.42	40.35

Source: Situation et tendances de la population Camerounais, Yde. 1985.

Table 4 presents the percentage of the total population of Cameroon living in towns. In 1991, the total population of Cameroon was 12,243,000. About 40% of this population was urban while 60% was rural. There is an increasing migration of rural people into urban centres and the Douala (Littoral Region) and Yaounde (Centre Region) metropolises. Urbanisation

rates are highest in the Littoral Region, followed by the Centre, and then the South West Regions. The towns in these Regions offer more opportunities for employment both in the formal and informal sectors of the economy. Employment opportunities are however scarce.

In spite of joblessness and squalor, shanty town residents cling to life with resourcefulness, tenacity, and hope. Most of them are convinced that the city offers, possibly for themselves and certainly for their children, the only chance of a better life. On balance, most tend to have more opportunities and are often better off than the rural poor they left behind. They also tend to have fewer children, since they are more readily reached by family planning and population control programmes.

Rural – Urban Linkages

Rural areas, rural development and the future of settlements in rural areas need to be understood and addressed in the context of the ongoing urbanisation trends. Population movements, production and consumption patterns, the flow of goods and provision of services, the availability and extent of infrastructure, as well as employment conditions and environmental protection and management are key issues which affect the dynamics of linkages between urban and rural development. Increasingly, the quality of these linkages will determine the living conditions of people in the urban and rural areas. Towns, cities and villages are experiencing an economic and social transformation which is likely to intensify in the next century: while villages are becoming better equipped with infrastructure and services, and change their traditional employment patterns, urban areas expand to the countryside and increase their food production through diverse forms of agriculture.

In the process of globalisation and growing interdependence, rural settlements represent a great challenge and opportunity for renewed developmental initiatives at all levels and in all fields. Many rural settlements, however, are facing a lack or an inadequacy of economic opportunities, especially employment, and of infrastructure and services, particularly those related to water, sanitation, health, education, communication, transportation and energy. Appropriate efforts and technologies for rural development can help reduce imbalances, unsustainable practices, poverty, isolation, environmental pollution and insecure land tenure. Such efforts can contribute to improving the linkage of rural settlements with the mainstream of economic, social and cultural life, to assuring sustainable communities and safe environments, and to reducing pressures on urban growth (Petra, 2000). Cities, towns and rural settlements are linked through the movements of goods, resources and people. Urban-rural linkages are of crucial importance for the sustainability of human settlements. As rural population growth has

outpaced the generation of employment and economic opportunities, rural-to-urban migration has steadily increased, particularly in developing countries, which has put enormous pressure on urban infrastructure and services already under serious stress. It is urgent to eradicate rural poverty and to improve the quality of living conditions, as well as to create employment and educational opportunities in rural settlements, regional centres and secondary cities. Full advantage must be taken of the complementary contributions and linkages of rural and urban areas by balancing their different economic, social and environmental requirements.

Overcoming the Urban-Rural Divide

Petra (2000) has emphasised the need to overcome the urban-rural divide. Since the industrial revolution, and the corresponding growth of towns and cities, there have been two dominant views regarding the rural-urban divide: an anti-urban view and a pro-urban view. These stereotypes have persisted up to the present day, and have significantly influenced national development policies and international development assistance.

The anti-urban view idealises, and regrets the disappearance of rural life. Urbanisation is seen as a destructive process, leading to the breakdown of social cohesion. This, combined with the all too common inability of cities and towns to provide adequate employment and services, results in a visible concentration of socio-economic problems, including poverty, crime, vice, disease and environmental pollution. This view of the rural-urban controversy was particularly prevalent at the turn of the last century when many European countries were going through rapid transformation from largely rural and mercantile economies to industrial economies, and when North American cities were being rapidly transformed by successive waves of immigration from the rural south and from Europe. Some of the justifications for present-day development policies with a focus on rural development are aimed at slowing-down rates of rural-to-urban migration. These can be traced back to this view of the rural-urban divide.

The pro-urban view sees urbanisation as a progressive process and as one of the key forces underlying technological innovation, economic development and socio-political change. According to this view, cities and towns being national and global centres of scientific knowledge and artistic achievement are seen as agents of innovation and socio-economic transformation. Proponents of this view point out that the most significant manifestations of virtually all of the ancient civilisations were their towns and cities, and conclude that the history of civilisation in general is inseparable from that of towns and cities. They further observe that urbanisation has been found to have positive impacts on fertility, mortality and other demographic trends, particularly in the recently urbanising nations of the

developing world. The current resurgence of interest in and attention to urban management, and of the view of cities as the engines of national economic growth and of development in general, is, in part, based on this pro-urban perspective. These two perceptions of the rural-urban divide have had strong influences in terms of developing investment policies.

Petra argues that among international development agencies, for example, investments in rural and urban areas have sometimes been seen as mutually exclusive and competing. Investments in rural areas, whether for human settlements or general development, have often been justified on the basis of reduction of rural-to-urban migration and urban investments are sometimes seen as reflecting an “urban bias”. Policies based on such notions offer little for the future of managing urban-rural linkages. On the question of rural-to-urban migration, perceptions are split. To some, policies aimed at reducing rates of rural-to-urban migration should be supported. To others, “urban containment” policies designed to curtail rates of rural-to-urban migration have failed in most countries of the world and rapid urbanisation should be accepted as inevitable, with no energy wasted on attempting to “reverse” migration back to rural areas.

For the purpose of establishing a sound basis for future policies on urban-rural linkages, therefore, the following should be born in mind (Petra, 2000):

- The rural-urban controversy is outdated and needs to be replaced by an interdependent rural-urban continuum to guide development planning and investments.
- The villages of today will become the towns of the 21st century: increased availability of infrastructure, services, communication and employment outside the agricultural sector transform the livelihoods in rural areas. In future, the villages and the urban settlements will lose their traditional distinctions: villages take on “urban elements” like infrastructure, non-agricultural employment, communication technology, etc., while expanded urban areas become agglomerations of separate communities with “rural” characters. In future, settlements will be different in size only, but similar in structure and functions.
- Urban-rural linkages can best be managed by new types of local authorities which transcend traditional administrative boundaries between cities and rural areas, capable of managing settlements and their economic, social and environmental linkages at the regional settlement level.

Environmental linkages and the countryside

Given the complexity of linkage between urban and rural and their settlements one will focus only on a few topics. First, the environment; and

more specifically the ecological footprints of a city and its economy on its rural surroundings. A city's environment impact on the ecosystem of its region is principally the result of the demand it concentrates for renewable resources drawn from forest, range lands, farmlands, watersheds or aquatic ecosystems from outside its boundaries. Certain natural resources are essential to the existence of any city-fresh water, food and fuel supplies. Many of the economic activities on which a city's prosperity depends require regular supplies of renewable resources. Without a continuing supply of fresh water, agricultural goods and forest products, many cities would rapidly decline in size and the economic base of a city is constrained by the size and quality of the natural resources of its surrounding region. The cost of transporting food, raw materials and fresh water always limited the extent to which a city could survive by drawing resources from outside its boundary. The high cost of transporting city-generated wastes away from the surrounding region promoted local solutions, and there was a need to ensure that such wastes did not damage the soils and water on which local agricultural production (and often fishing) depended. If local ecosystem were degraded, the prosperity of the city suffered – or in extreme cases, its viability as a city was threatened. In conclusion, a city's ecological footprint remained relatively local. The rural areas provide the energy and materials required to support towns (figure 32). In this way rural energy and materials are continuously depleted to the detriment of nutrient recycling in rural areas. Eventually they suffer from resource impoverishment (both human and material)

Provision of rural infrastructure and services

With respect to infrastructure linkages, rural areas, towns and cities are connected by infrastructural networks, principally transport, energy and telecommunications. Well managed and efficient infrastructure networks lie at the heart of rural – urban development, with regard to the functioning of markets for products and services. To a large extent, the adequacy and efficiency of infrastructure provision determines the success or failure of relationships between cities, towns and their hinterlands. This observation extends to the management of production patterns (both of agricultural and non-agricultural goods), the growth of commerce and trade, the response to population growth and movements, the reduction of poverty, the coverage of education and health services, or the protection of the environment.

Rural –Urban nutrient flow: Plant nutrients leak away when markets and towns grow.

Food supply

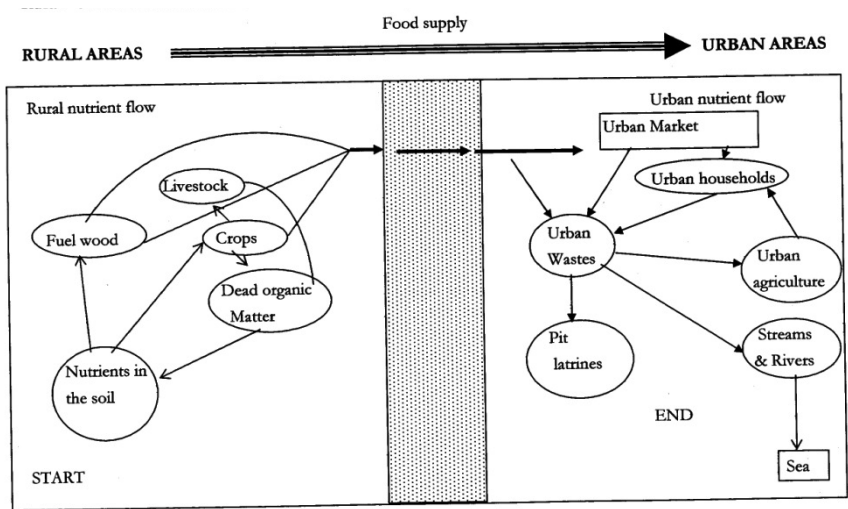


Figure 32a: Rural – Urban Nutrient Flow

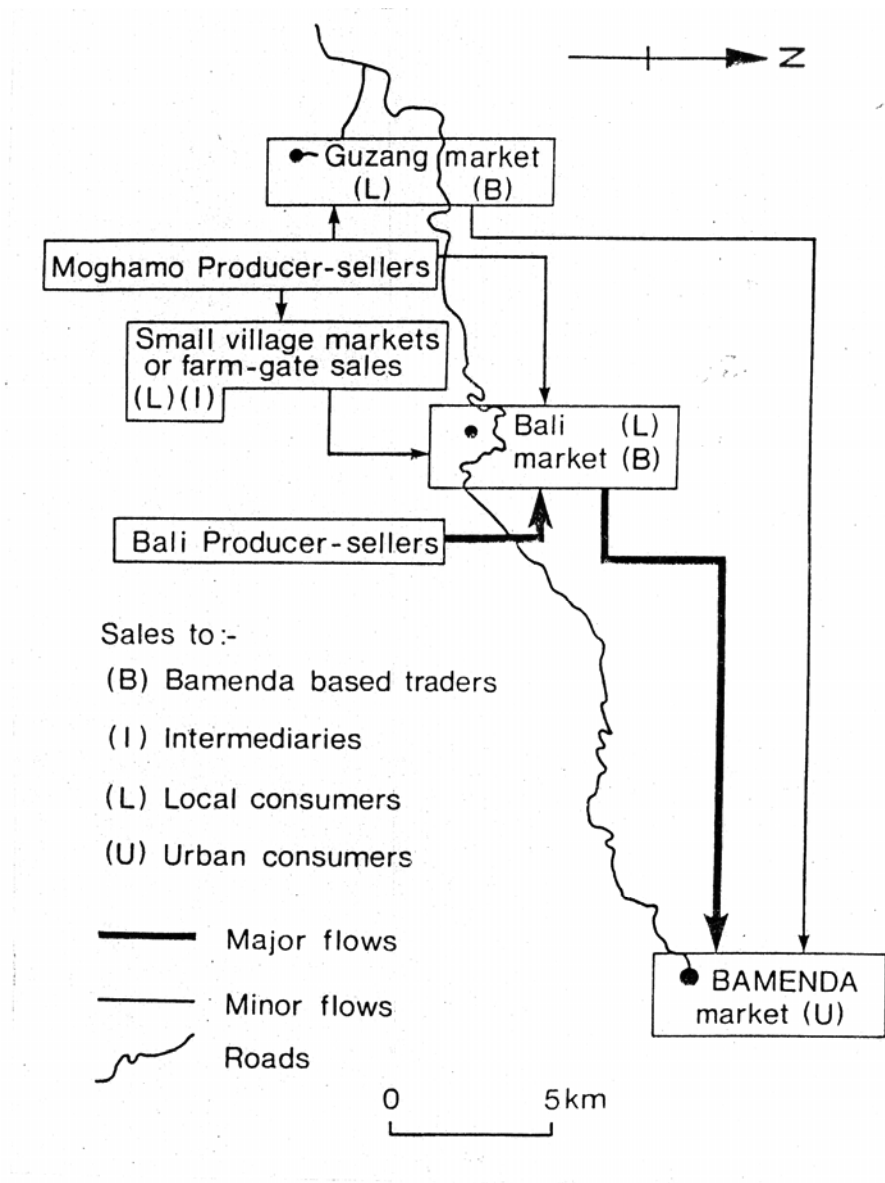


Figure 32b: Rural-urban Marketing channels in North West Cameroon: Gari Marketing in Bali-Guzang production zone. Farmers lack access to local, district and Regional Market centres.



Plate 27: Women selling palm oil in a rural district market: Bali market. The market has a strong rural-urban linkage with Bamenda city thanks to a tarred motor road



Plate 28: Rural –urban transportation of farm produce by motored cycles on the Bamenda – Guzang road. Efficient farm-to-market roads strengthen rural – urban market and service linkages

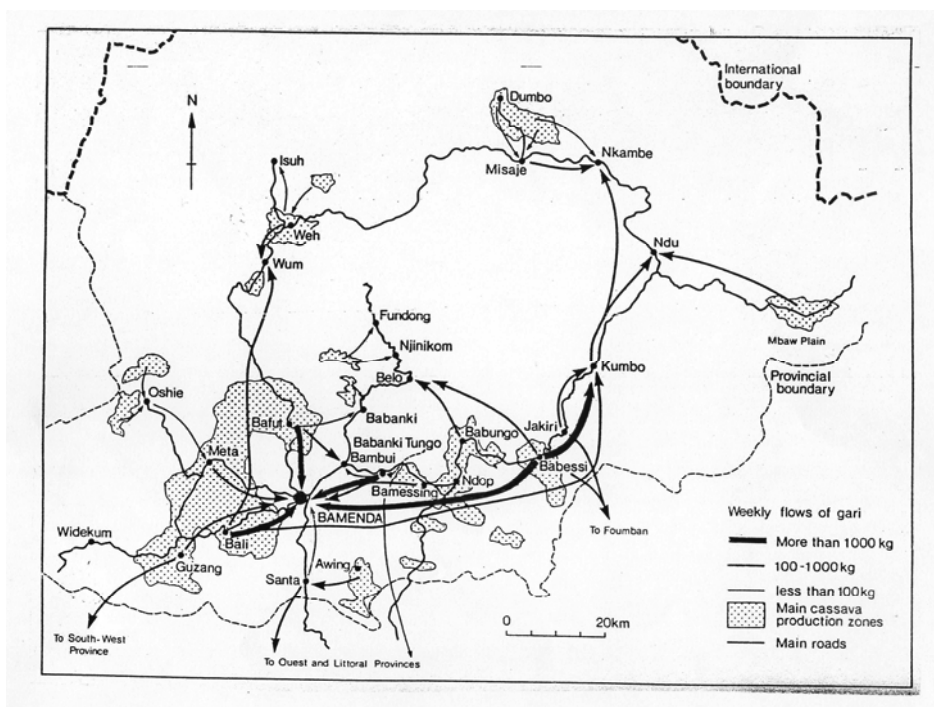


Figure 32c: Marketing of gari in North West Region: Rural-rural Marketing channels and district level are tampered by the lack of farm-to-market roads

In principle, good infrastructure raises productivity, lowers production and consumption costs and increases equal access to social services. The quality of infrastructure and service provision within and between urban and rural areas has become increasingly important in attracting new investment. The capacity to attract industries or service enterprises that can operate successfully in international markets is particularly dependent on high quality infrastructure, especially in the rapid and cost-effective handling of freight and telecommunication systems. The quality of infrastructure is an important factor in ranking potential sites for location of direct investment. All the countries or regions with successes in attracting enterprises within the increasingly globalized world economy have also greatly improved the range and quality of their infrastructure.

Rural – to – Urban Migration

The scale, direction and nature of migration flows are so fundamental to understanding urbanising patterns and changes in the spatial distribution of population that it is surprising that internal migration receives so little attention. There has been relatively little recent research on the scale and

nature of internal migration flows in the country. Rural exodus is often influenced by such factors as crop prices, land owning structures and changes in agricultural technology and crop-mixes in the countryside, and the lack of employment, and access to basic socio-economic amenities. These induce rural exodus to towns that are poverty traps. These growing number of migrants faced with urban poverty bring their agricultural antecedents into the urban landscape.

The growth of urban agriculture is largely understood as a response to escalating urban poverty and to rising food prices. Most likely, urban agriculture will expand in the future, both inside and on the outskirts of urban centres. Apart from serving the survival needs of poor urban dwellers, this activity will extend more and more to commercial farming and constitute a growing employment alternative in urban areas of developing countries. Also, urban agriculture can be an efficient way of recycling urban waste and of contributing to resource conservation in surrounding rural areas, for example through urban-based production of fuel wood.

Most of the rural exodus is attributable to poverty in rural areas, to a lack of access to basic needs such as housing, health care or drinking water and inadequate production factors such as roads that are passable all year round, electricity, telecommunications systems, loans, etc. These are joined by the lack of access to markets for selling goods without incurring prohibitive transportation and transaction costs. All these factors lead to a vicious circle: almost completely non-mechanised production methods, low yields, low production output and poor labour productivity. Those sections of the population that migrate to the towns cherish the hope that they or their children will have better prospects, and therefore a better future, in an urban environment (Dirven, 2000).

There are still other reasons for the rural exodus, namely the obstacles young people in particular have to overcome if they want to become part of the productive and social life of the rural community. These include lack of access to land, credit and information on employment opportunities. If they cannot find a way of surmounting these hurdles, they migrate. Around one-third of the young people in rural areas move to the urban centres, with the numbers of women far outstripping. Many studies and surveys show that a large proportion of young people living in rural areas do not see their future in agriculture. They associate agriculture with low income, high risk, long working hours and low social status for agricultural workers. It is likewise well known that many young people are unable to find work in the rural sector to suit their qualifications and salary expectations. These young people have to choose between a rural life of dissatisfaction or a new beginning in the city.

Strategies to arrest rural exodus

No straightforward answer has yet been found to the question of how far migration is due to the aforementioned integration obstacles or whether other factors, such as the growing significance of off-farm employment, globalisation of markets, etc., also play a role. The radical change that migration brings about is not yet fully understood by decision-makers or institutions (banks, technical assistance organisations, urban institutions, NGOs, etc).

Dirven recommends that improved education and training in rural areas must be given priority as a first measure in stemming rural exodus. The reasons for the rural exodus are complex and multi-faceted. What strategies might be devised to counteract further migration, especially by young people? One of the first measures should be to continue to improve education and training conditions in the rural areas. Emphasis should be given to a broad-based curriculum. It would be completely wrong, in our opinion, to respond to the rural exodus by reducing the rural curriculum exclusively to rural and agricultural subjects. Nor should it be urban in orientation. It should be designed to give young people the broadest possible scope to decide what they want to do in their future working lives.

A curriculum restricted to agriculture would not reflect the multiple activities that rural households increasingly engage in, and the growing involvement of the rural population in rural off-farm activities, for example municipal services, commerce, transports, construction, agro-industry, etc. In the opinion of the author, a cornerstone of any development strategy for rural areas could be to provide young rural dwellers who have completed several levels of training with access to production inputs and decision-making on preferential terms, in other words to new technologies, loans and marketing opportunities. The same applies to measures to improve access to land ownership for small farmers.

A number of global action agendas of the last decade have pointed out some common features and principles for future development, particularly Agenda 21, the Habitat Agenda, the action programme on population and development, or the programme of action which resulted from the World Social Summit or the World Food Summit. They all determined essentially the scope and prospects for implementing the global goals of human development: reducing poverty, the need to focus more at the local level, the involvement of civil society and its groupings in broad-based participation for development. The time has come to apply these principles more actively in our search for effective strategies to strengthen the interlinkages between urban and rural development. Both government and the community in rural areas must at long last change their way of thinking and come to terms with

the fact that “rural” is not necessarily synonymous with “agricultural”. Policies, development measures and investments in infrastructure and training must be geared towards a heterogeneous rural environment that allows for a multi-disciplinary vision for the rural life of tomorrow. Younger sections of the population should be provided with comprehensive information on measures and support programmes.

Post-independence rural development strategies

Integrated Rural Development Projects (IRDP) initiated after Independence (1960s) generally adopted a multi-sectoral, regional approach to alleviate rural poverty. The approach aimed at raising rural incomes, mainly through increased agricultural productivity, and tried to consider the synergistic effects of basic education, health and other services (Engel, 1999). Projects usually followed an integrated but “Centralised” approach to local development. Implementation was in the hands of either Government line agencies or autonomous parastatal agencies. Neither Community Based Organisations (CBOs), nor local government institutions played a role in the process. These early IRDPs followed a top-down implementation, usually through one parastatal organisation. These are often characterised by rigid blueprint planning with implementation measures largely commodity-based rather than resource-based.

These approaches were heavily criticised in the 1980s and the World Bank abandoned rural development projects in favour of traditional sector – specific programmes and structural adjustment lending. Bilateral donors took a radical view and tried to reform their rural development projects (GTZ, 1993). They did not see justified abandoning a directly, poverty-oriented, regional, supra-sectoral project approach to rural development and demonstrated, that many of the crucial problems were not linked to the approach itself and difficulties could be overcome. Towards the end of the 1980s “Regional Rural Development Planning (RRD)” was further developed as a concept, which promotes the development of the particular region by giving emphasis to the spatial dimension of development and a regional framework of action. In some African countries such as Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia and Ghana these regional rural development efforts received

a major impetus when decentralisation processes gained momentum and the link to such decentralisation was established. This chapter is based on experiences at community as well as district level (Engels, 1999). This is where any decentralisation efforts have to prove their effectiveness in terms of rural development and poverty alleviation.

Resources for local and participative development

Decree No. 93/32 of 25th November 1993 and Decree No. 95/082 of 24th April 1995 created new rural councils and districts. After the council elections of 21st January 1996 rural councillors were elected. The question of their sustainability is a concern in the country. Do rural councils possess the capacity to effect rural development and to alleviate rural poverty? If we examine the budgets of rural councils in the North West Region (Table 5), the following conclusions can be made:

- the little importance given to investments, which account for an average of less than 2% of their budgets. This suggests that local councils cannot invest in development projects using local resources. Moreover, councils have not received state subsidies for several years, hence, inadequate community-oriented planning;
- the total lack of planning to promote local development in terms of rural infrastructure and basic socio-economic amenities;
- the many loopholes in the tax collection system partly by deepening rural poverty, inaccessibility of taxpayers, lack of transportation facilities and the absence of tax control mechanisms.

In the face of all these problems, the conclusion is that the financial means of local councils cannot effectively promote rural development programmes. District councils as self-government structures, therefore, cannot respond more effectively to the country's development needs in general, and to local communities in particular. However, the implementation of the decentralisation law is anxiously awaited by Cameroonians. However, the central government continues to emphasise the commitment to the policy of self-reliance to local authorities. Major problems still persist: funds are still centralised, means of generating revenue to attain self-sufficiency are limited, and ministerial control is overwhelming.

Table 5: Estimates and proceeds of the Main Municipalities in North West Region, Cameroon

Estimates and proceeds of the main councils										
Councils	Estimates (in CFA F millions)					Proceeds in CFA F millions				
	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97
Bamenda	408	437	554	-	-	328 (80%)	351 (80%)	409 (73%)	-	-
Santa	65	62	66	70	89	36 (55%)	40 (64%)	42 (64%)	47 (67%)	40 (44%)
Bali	33	-	49	60	-	15 (47%)	12 (24%)	14 (23%)	-	-
Tubah	92	101	-	-	-	0.92 (10%)	91 (9%)	-	-	-
Bafut	-	-	-	-	28	-	-	-	-	14 (50%)
Kumbo town	149	150	154	-	-	36 (24%)	35 (23%)	51 (33%)	-	-
Kumbo rural	88	68	104	53	-	042 (4%)	8 (12%)	9 (9%)	-	-
Jakiri	88	96	99	110	109	17 (17%)	23 (24%)	25 (25%)	15 (14%)	17 (15%)
Elak	66	68	99	135	-	10 (16%)	12 (17%)	15 (15%)	12	-
Nkambe	247	215	216	128	-	44 (17%)	43 (20%)	33 (15%)	27 (21%)	-
Nwa	49	47	44	57	-	17 (35%)	20 (44%)	19 (44%)	9 (16%)	-
Ako	-	-	131	-	-	-	-	14 (11%)	-	-
Ndu	-	-	-	51	66	-	-	-	13 (25%)	37 (56%)
Ako	-	-	131	-	-	-	-	14 (11%)	-	-
Ndu	-	-	-	51	66	-	-	-	12 (25%)	37 (56%)
Wum	-	-	351	350	367	-	-	38 (11%)	37 (10%)	18 (5%)
Furu-Awa	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	-	1.7 (15%)
Mbengwi	93	117	-	-	-	40 (34%)	40 (34%)	-	-	-
Batibo	142	152	113	106	-	24 (16%)	20 (13%)	33 (29%)	32 (30%)	-
Fundong	109	109	-	-	-	0.7 (4%)	23 (21%)	-	-	-
Fonfuka	-	-	-	18	30	-	-	4 (22%)	6 (22%)	-
Ndop	124	142	158	164	-	29 (23%)	31 (22%)	34 (21%)	19 (11%)	-
Balikumbat	-	-	-	18	-	-	-	-	2.7 (14%)	-
Babessi	-	-	-	39	-	-	-	-	5 (12%)	-

Despite the above bottlenecks the government has frequently reaffirmed that decentralisation is necessary and desirable in that it promotes and strengthens democracy and civic responsibility in terms of governance and development. It also officially realises that decentralisation helps in cutting down bureaucracy, and may eventually lead to a more efficient governing system. There is need to strengthen local governing districts and to confront

inadequacies such as: inadequate planning procedures and instruments as well as technical capacity for development planning. Planning responsibilities of villages, rural districts, regions and Regions are not known and local demands are not met by financial plans at higher level. Sectoral plans are not co-ordinated. Economic promotion strategies at the village and rural district level hardly exist (Figure 33 and Figure 34).



Figure 33: Decentralisation will foster decision-making and development at the local level. Partnership programmes dedicated to the sharing and exchange of experience and expertise in support of sustainable human settlement development will be necessary.



Figure 34: The supply of potable water is a priority need for rural women but their voices are hardly heard in a centralized system.

New Political Framework for Rural Development

The political framework of the country needs to be changed to allow for a genuine community development approach through democratically elected structures. Two planning processes may be undertaken at district level: the development of yearly plans (annual annexes) and the formulation of five year district development plans. The yearly planning undertaken within the district commences with a review of the implementation of the previous plan. This monitoring function is undertaken by the regional sectoral line agencies and by the regional development-planning officer. Annual planning is lined directly to the budgeting process. The central ministries provide each district with copies of the forwarded budgets. At the district level, the sectoral line departments prepare the annual annexes. They must liaise with the communities in order to determine development activities. The development activities are then prioritised by the sectoral line departments and then submitted for approval to the district development committee.

At the central level the ministries prepare the public investment programmes and the forward budget. The practical core constraints to be encountered in effecting local level planning will include (Schall, 2000):

- inadequate community mobilisation and participation;

- lack of separation of developmental from control functions;
- too many “layers” in the system (reducing transparency and increasing bureaucracy);
- no spending authority at the community or district level (e.g. General Development Fund);
- state’s role still characterised by the idea of providing “development” rather than being a “service” provider to the communities, and it still dominates the process (especially the development fora and committees);
- the lack of transparency and accountability of resources and funds.

Changes in the political frame conditions need to be undertaken in order to allow for a genuine community and grassroots oriented development approach through democratically elected structures (i.e. local elected assembly). Flexible operational guidelines have to be established which define how the community development process can be interfaced with improved services provisions by the private and public sectors. Ultimately, the local level planning approach needs to be anchored in a legal document (e.g. a decentralisation act) which provides the necessary legislative backing to the operational guidelines.

Numerous constraints must be overcome at the local level:

- communities have to be systematically mobilised and sensitised. The process will definitely be time consuming and expensive;
- without sufficient local community mobilisation the misappropriation of resources and funds may discourage government from disbursing block grants to the village and district levels;
- without the necessary training, villagers will not be able to develop realistic medium term development “visions” out of which they will then prioritise their yearly development plans. Capacity building will be urgently needed;
- corruption is still rife in Cameroon. Allocation of resources at the national level still lacks transparency and often does not take into consideration the needs and requirements of the communities;
- fiscal management at the level of local councils suffers from a waste of resources, misallocation of meagre funds and the inability to collect local taxes and revenues. Human and institutional capacity building is urgently required.

Key ingredients necessary to enable village and district level planning and implementation are:

- Mobilised communities (They have to organise themselves, they require access to resources and have to be able to get the necessary services);
- Elected assemblies or councils at the village and district levels (They have to prioritise development needs and requirements and develop village and district development plans);
- Resources at the village and district level (in form of block grants from the central government coupled to own revenues);
- Linkages to the district and national level private and public service providers.

Regional Rural Development Planning (RRP)

Efforts by the central government to decentralise government decision-making provide new opportunities for regional activities that are essential for successfully addressing poverty. Although the determination of central government may be weak and the scope of decentralisation narrow, regional rural development planning (RRP) can gain a new momentum, because the institutional conditions are more conducive to rural regional development (Engel, 1991):

- Local government institutions are in place with a “downstream accountability”;
- Communities have better opportunities to participate in the design, implementation, and monitoring of projects, which are suited to their needs.

RRD (Rural Regional Development) support is provided to local government and communities, thus generating know-how, which can be channelled into the national discussion on decentralisation and be transferred to other areas. A process-oriented and rolling planning rather than blueprint approach is followed. Local-level organisations and institutions are made responsible and forms of institutionalised beneficiary participation are sought.

Emerging principles for RRD include:

- **Adaptation to the location:** Every RRD programme needs to be tailored to the unique problems of “its” region and “its” population. Such an adaptation of innovations and support services to the particular region, however, is severely limited under centralised arrangements, especially if they operate on the basis of national sector plans and implement “downwards” through sectoral line agencies. Adaptation to local conditions is best achieved when a project, which is

identified/owned by the communities is linked with a regional development strategy (of the local government entity) and technical skills and services of the (non-) governmental service structure.

- **Multi-sectoral commitment:** Every RRD programme is planned as a “Demand driven” set of support measures, which will allow a wider range of development constraints to be overcome. Any “sector” of regional development can be used as a starting point within the community. The resulting complexity of support measures and subsequent management and steering problems can only be overcome if,
 1. a local Government has co-ordination powers in the given region,
 2. sectoral line agencies, as well as private sector agencies can provide technical and implementation support, and
 3. communities are the driving forces for the identification and implementation of projects.
- **Interlinking measures:** RRD is to be understood as a programme and not a medley or mixture of measures. When combined, the individual community projects should strengthen each other. As a result the overall impact is therefore greater than the sum of the individual achievements. Interlinking at community level is one of the benefits of community participation. Interlinking at (sub)-regional level requires regional framework planning and co-ordination powers of local government entities.
- **Step-by-step progress:** The outcome of complex development processes cannot be anticipated with certainty. Errors are human, especially, when future human action has to be predicted. Planning participation-oriented development is, therefore, not a drawing-board procedure. Activity planning must be constantly adaptable as an ongoing process during programme implementation. The pace of development is determined, amongst other things, by the practical and technical capacities of people and by the speed with which consensus is achieved.
- **Field of action is the region:** The impact area of an RRD program is the natural and economic environment of the rural population. It is often identical with the government administrative unit – the region, division district, etc. In order to achieve maximum effectiveness while keeping inputs to a minimum the development activities have to be organised so that they are geared to the economic and social relationship network.
- **Self-help orientation:** Active participation by the local population is the basis for RRD. These people must themselves identify, plan and implement RRD measures. Self-help strengthens the feeling of self-responsibility. RRD programmes encourage self-help; they guide and support it. Successful self-help stimulates creativity and promotes self-

awareness. It creates a conducive environment for private initiative and becomes the basis for an independent development of the region.

- Successful regional rural development in the context of decentralisation can be pursued on the basis of the following strategic guidelines:
- **Local government vision and regional development plan.** A key focus of capacity-building efforts should be to develop in local governments a sustainable ability to support community projects. This calls for a broad vision and a planning and strategic framework to fulfil their development mandate. Such a framework is usually expressed in a development plan for the (sub) region. Prioritising resource allocations for projects should be done against this plan. It is also a communication tool and it helps to link with national-level or sectoral objectives. In addition, it can also provide strategies for dealing with complex projects across the administrative boundaries (e.g. watershed management, rural tourism development, biodiversity protection).
- **Community initiative and response by local government:** Projects should be identified by community members. Although there is usually an untapped innovation capacity and intimate knowledge of local potentials within the communities, the communities generally require support to turn ideas for local development into concrete action and to request the necessary services. Local governments in turn must see the need to “respond” to such community initiatives. This often requires substantial change of attitude among local representatives.
- **Rural poverty targeting:** Support measures should be designed in such a way, that a majority of the rural poor are likely to benefit directly or indirectly. Local governments must follow a more holistic approach towards poverty alleviation, which, apart from household income includes access to services in education, health care and housing. Resource allocations should focus on services aimed at basic needs and review previous allocations.
- **Reform of public service provision.** Efforts to streamline provision of public services should be supported. Service delivery can include mixed arrangements, such as public-community partnerships (e.g. contracting communities for specific services), public-private partnerships (e.g. service contracts, joint ventures), or horizontal co-operation between districts (E.g. to exploit economies of scale, secure watersheds, which go beyond administrative boundaries). All of these usually require improved capacities to manage such service deliveries.
- **Channelling of fiscal flows:** Appropriate level of fiscal resources should be available at lower levels. Too often, the devolution of functions to local governments is not accompanied by the financial capacity required

to sustain them. Funding is still mainly allocated not to local government, but line departments. This bypassing of local government can severely undermine their credibility. Inter-governmental transfer of nationally raised revenue towards local government is almost always required for rural areas, but rarely is it properly organised on the basis of legal stipulations.

- **Financial management.** Budgeting, accounting, financial monitoring and financial management are generally deficient in newly established local government entities. Even an extremely precarious financial position is not recognised, downward trends not detected and corrective action missing. Forecasting of current revenues and expenditures are a prerequisite for long-term capital budgets. Budgetary processes need to be open and transparent and constituencies must have a say in approving decision. These are key areas for capacity-building measures.
- **Regional flexibility.** Common natural and economic characteristics within the region, as well as communal socio-cultural conditions provide a variety of opportunities to develop regional specific solutions. Such region-specific solutions should be promoted, not package approaches developed by sector.
- **Cross-sectoral approach.** Linkages between sector issues need be addressed in integrated planning approaches. Therefore, the planning cannot be restricted to particular sectoral authorities. Local government needs to set up its own, planning system and planning units. A cross-sectoral planning perspective does not preclude that implementation of individual projects may well be under the responsibility of organisations with specific sectoral responsibilities. Co-ordination mechanisms, however, remain with local government entities and the choice of sectors must largely be determined through community involvement.

Decentralisation offers a new perspective for regional rural development. It allows for a regional approach, which takes into consideration spatial dimensions of development. Locally compatible solutions can be developed and local government entities can turn into the driving force for development efforts in their region. The opportunities should not be missed.

Accountability for local development funds

With the democratisation and decentralisation process accountability becomes central at the level of District Development Projects. One of the common challenges facing such development projects is how to address key concerns of accountability. Kullenberg and Porter (1999) emphasise that accountability in this context is not concerned with special arrangements

donors make to ensure that local actors within a project are accountable for use of donor funds; or that physical outputs are delivered according to the approved project document. Rather, accountability is understood from the perspective of national policy makers whose principal challenge is to define for national application sustainable checks and balances to ensure accountability. In this way, they will offset the political risks associated with devolution of development funds or rural service delivery. In this context, why is accountability an issue? What concerns must the government address when it decides to transfer development resources and authority from central to local governments? How do these shape decentralisation policy and the ability of advocates to “sell” decentralisation politically and maintain that support? The challenge here is that decentralisation is still just evolving and institutions needed to promote accountability such as an active press, effective judicial and accounting system are not strong. Kullenberg and Porter (1999) using the recent experience of Uganda outline the guiding principles of accountability, namely that:

1. political and administrative control over services shall be devolved to the lowest feasible level of government according to the principle of subsidiary;
2. the assignment of functions to key levels of local government should be clear and unambiguous;
3. control over resources (i.e. financing and authority) should accompany the assignment of functions; and
4. local governments must be accountable to their constituents for carrying out mandated responsibilities and to the central government when they spend resources on its behalf as its agent.

Current resource constraints dictate that the full devolution of development budgets by the central government to district councils is still far off. Donors and many government policy makers will also doubt the capacity of local councils to plan, finance, and manage the delivery services to their constituencies. Second, there is a pressing need to develop a system of incentives and sanctions to promote accountability and establish a clear link between taxes and transfers received and services delivered. District Development Projects (DDP) must focus on these two pre-conditions. The design of the DDP is based on the following assumptions:

- Decentralisation fosters local-local dialogue, which is the essence of good governance. In turn, good governance is believed to result in improved services, which is expected to have a positive impact on poverty.

- Fiscal transfers of discretionary resources to local government improve the responsiveness of political leaders. While local governments are “closer to the people”, discretionary or “horizontally integrated” funds allow for full negotiation of investments within an elected political body which represents and accounts to the local community.
- Planning and financing of local investments must be anchored in the national statutory and regulatory framework. Donor-created parallel structures jeopardise sustainability and can undermine accountability.
- Community participation is defined in terms of political representation for which clear, constitutionally mandated provision is made, from village upwards through levels of local council.
- Successful decentralisation requires strong, capable central government to mentor, monitor and regulate. Central government has a crucial role in setting the framework of incentives and sanctions for local government action.
- There is need to identify the specific actors in DDP; namely:
 - the accountability of local politicians to their constituents (honest, transparent use of development funds according to agreed upon conditions);
 - the accountability of technical staff to political authorities (to deliver services, including providing reliable and timely professional advice to support wise investment decisions) and
 - mutual accountability of local governments and central governments.

The Ugandan experience is outlined below. It lays down minimum conditions and performance measures.

The system works as follows. To all local government development funds are allocated according to a set formula. However, they do not automatically get these funds, they must first meet minimum conditions. They must demonstrate basic standards of financial accounting and that functional committees are in place and capable of steering investments through the design, appraisal and implementation process. Once they have demonstrated this minimum capacity, funds are released in guaranteed and predictable quarterly instalments. However, to maintain their quarterly payments, local governments must report on performance: accounts must be submitted for audit, they must show that periodic monitoring of the investments is taking place.

The above sanctions are matched by incentives. At the end of each financial year, higher level local governments are required to assess the performance of lower levels, again, according to previously negotiated and

agreed standards. If local government performs well they will receive additional development funds; if they perform poorly funds will be reduced.

Performance is measured by questions such as: Were local plans honoured in practice? Were plans developed through an inclusive, participatory process recognising the needs of different groups in the community? Did local councils invest development funds in services with a poverty focus? Did they meet their co-financing obligations? Was there adequate publicity about the rules of access, the amounts of money received, and the decisions of Council about approved projects? Did higher level governments meet their obligations to support lower levels with technical advice and supervision of investments?

Some performance measures are based on objective, easily verifiable criteria. Others require subjective judgement and interpretation. It is easy to determine if a Council submitted the annual accounts for audit, or whether co-financing was provided on time. More difficult is to judge whether investments reflected community priorities, or whether higher level governments provided adequate technical support. Thus, the measures will need to be refined through practical experience.

Creating a workable system of performance measurement will take time. It is important to clarify roles and responsibilities for assessing performance (who judges who) and then agree on how they will be bound together to regularly negotiate over what good performance means in practice in specific situations. However difficult, tying funding to performance is a crucial element in decentralised planning and financing. It encourages compliance with national standards – by providing tools and procedures for measuring local performance in financial management, planning and investment decisions. This is one necessary condition for “upward accountability” of local governments.

Further, performance measures which reward timely and high quality service delivery, create the conditions for “downward accountability”. Local politicians, more conscious of the need to deliver, put pressure on technical staff to provide accurate, timely information for their decisions. Politicians also become more responsive to pressure from below which reinforces local democracy and new systems of representative politics.

Accountability requires that people are informed about the basic rules of the game. If communities are to engage meaningfully in “local-local” dialogue with their government officials about development budgets, they must know at least its size, terms of access and conditions of use. Given the radical changes in planning and financing being introduced and the extraordinary range of literacy and political awareness of people in these districts, development communication is a central component of the DDP. However

many the risks, the benefits have been well established in the DDP as well as experience elsewhere.

Structural land and holdings

From figure one in chapter one we saw that assuming constant fertility, Cameroon had a per capita cultivable land of 3 hectares per person in 1960, 2.1 hectares per person in 1975, 0.9 hectares per person in 2000 and 0.4 hectares per person by 2025. Long-term forecasts of population density and shrinking per head holdings lead towards considerations of viable farm size for use of modern technology. The rural planner has to consider appropriate options for land tenural arrangements and models of rural settlement spatial planning. The chapter reviews experiences gained in several settlement planning projects as an aid to the planner who will face the Cameroonian situation. Land tenural arrangements can consider one of the following options which are ranked by increasing degree of change envisaged. This is understandable because rural people are strongly attached to their ancestral homes and farm plots (Hunter, 1978):

- **Common use of facilities:** Agricultural infrastructure and equipment such as farm machines, farm transport, storage facilities, basic processing mills and irrigation structures can be jointly used by villagers. This is almost always valuable and involves no tenural change. It is also an excellent focus for farmer group formation.
- **Common land use – ownership unaffected:** Apart from village natural pastures, there are very few cases in the country where farmers have grouped themselves in order to use land in common. Retention of ownership appears psychologically important, and this can be a useful first step towards better land use organisation. Under such arrangements produce shares can be proportionate to the land area owned by each member.
- **Full-co-operative farming – ownership pooled:** Extended families under their lineage may embark on co-operative production in order to gain any benefits reserved for co-operatives. This is little more than an extension of individual ownership. In social terms it may accentuate tension between big and small land owners within the same lineage.
- **Total communal organisation:** One can cite the Chinese experience and the Ujama of Tanzania. Its success appears to depend upon at least five main factors:
 - o a high degree of devolution of management right down to the district and the village levels;

- a very efficient administrative service and broad planning competence;
- a good framework of locally elected and recruited cadres, paralleled by the local council experts and the administration, right down to the grassroots level;
- the achievement of the sense that, at village level, the land really belongs to the tillers, rather than to the municipality or the state; and
- the differential treatment of main food crops, some commercial crops, and small privately grown backyard gardens.

Unless these conditions are achieved copying of the total communal land reform system is unlikely to succeed; it involves total and very strong control of all labour movements and all work payments.

- **Settlement on new land:** New settlement provides a social and economic *tabula rasa* which invites experiment; it has also proved extremely difficult. Objectives are here very important. Is it primarily designed for production (economic) ends, or primarily for social ends? The difference is often most clearly reflected in the size of proposed new holdings – big enough for modern commercial output, or minimal for subsistence plus minor cash earnings in order to serve a maximum of unemployed or landless families. The Gezira Scheme in the Sudan and SEMRY in Yagoua (Cameroon) illustrate the former. Some of the Kenyan resettlement on ex-European land reflects the latter. The Upper Noun Development Authority in Ndop also reflects the latter. The main requirement on this subject is for absolutely clear definition of objectives, and for clear foresight as to the decisions which will be needed concerning three main difficulties:

- social provision, cost repayment, and dependency;
- minimal technical control of production processes and technical, institutional and human capacity building. Controls often include: a) no diversification of crops from those envisaged by the settlement scheme; b) no private shops; c) no employment outside the scheme; d) compulsory membership of a co-operative; and e) rigid housing standards. Such controls are not exercised over other “free farmers” outside the scheme. They may therefore result in battles between rebellious settlers and the management authority.
- Administrative form: A settlement authority will be formed at the early stage of the scheme. It must be multi-sectoral. It will face the challenge of:

- a) Precise social/economic objectives.
- b) Precise decision on division of capital and recurrent costs between government or municipality and settlers, avoiding very long and onerous repayments.
- c) Minimal controls, technically-essential; minimal social/organisational impositions.
- d) Consideration of plantation alternatives or an “outgrower” system where high control is essential.
- e) Standard social provision, with regard to the danger of dependency and of creating a new elite.
- f) Consideration of pioneer mixed farming after minimal infrastructural provision.
- g) Reversion to “normal” administration whenever possible.
- h) Provision for settler representation in management.

The Planning Levels

- **Regional Planning Level:** The planning of a wide area, based on a system of villages and services related to one or more urban centres. The region is divided into spheres of influence depending on the location of the settlements and service centres.
- **Sub-regional planning level:** is based on a multi-cellular rural unit or a number of villages with a common centre. At this stage, more detailed plans for the selected area are drawn up. The information received from other disciplines is related to a larger number of practical subjects as will be elucidated later.
- **Settlement level:** This stage is inseparable from the previous one; the influence of other disciplines is reduced. At this stage, the rural planning specialist is concerned with the application of the conceptual plan drawn up at the regional level. Interdisciplinary collaboration now takes the form of consultation for control to avoid mistakes, rather than actual planning. The conceptual plan cannot be altered at this stage; what may alter are details or phasing of the project.



Plate29: Aghem village in the North West Region. Example of indigenous village with haphazard development (unplanned). Spatial planning in such villages requires necessary adjustments and adaptations to topography, farming system, land tenure and existing infrastructure.

- **Home plot level:** This stage deals with the detailed planning of the structures on the home plot, both for the requirements of the family and the livestock. Investment levels for personal needs are now decided, as are the standards of housing and the phasing of building. The level of investment is calculated according to economic rentability.

The Planning Process

Table 6 shows a breakdown of the physical planning process according to the four levels outlined above and according to the three important phases – feasibility, preliminary planning and detailed planning.

- **Feasibility planning at the regional level:** This stage commences with the data collection concerning the region. The basis for regional planning in agricultural settlement or resettlement project lies, in the objectives expressed in the agroeconomic plan. The aim of the physical plan is to create a framework within which the desired agricultural activities can operate.

After the initial decision has been made regarding the estimate of size of the family unit and the general outline drawn up for planning agricultural activity, the planner may commence his division of the region into sectors. The aims of this regional subdivision are to determine its agricultural potential on the basis of soil surveys. The various sectors are classified by potential land use value for agricultural purposes. The sectors are then measured to give a preliminary conception of distances and relationships between the various land use areas.

Table 6: The Planning Process – Expressing the Related Levels

	Regional level	Sub-regional level
Plan for feasibility of project	1) Data and information – preparation of tables of soil classification. 2) Quantitative estimate of classified soil blocks. 3) Receipt of information from other disciplines. 4) Preparation of alternative planning ideas.	Calculation of areas designated for intensive cultivation in accordance with proposed types of farm. Determination of size of holdings according to land use. Creation of balance between the settlements and service centres. Alternative groups of settlement
Preliminary plan of project	1) Detailed re-examination of idea 2) Plan of general communication system	1) Conclusions of examinations and tests and updating of alternatives proposed, feasibility plan.
Detailed planning	1) Further discussion for re-checking	1) Comparative examination of plan in the light of additional information accumulated during the preliminary planning stage. 2) Detailed costs of infrastructure.
	Settlement level	Home plot level
Feasibility of project	1) Determination of size of house plot 2) Allocation of land for structures according to farm	1) Determination of residential unit and its standard in terms of proposed investment, compared with aims of agricultural planning and expected

	types 3) Population estimate (number of families in settlement) relative to net area available to settlement 4) Calculations of relation of area for agricultural use, public areas and roads 5) Equilibrium of distances within the settlement 6) Preparation of planning ideas for the settlement.	income. 2) Form of the yard
Preliminary plan	1) Determination of building standards of settlement in general terms. Preparation of development plan. 2) Conclusions in the light of examination of data and details of settlement plan according to the same headings as appear in the feasibility plan 3) Determination of surface drainage principles and for levelling of land.	1) General plan of farmyard, structure and standards of farm. 2) Plan of house is transferred to detailed planning.
Detailed planning	1) Detailed land allocation, preparation for the surveyor. 2) Detailed planning of public areas including building plans. 3) Determination of size of structures in public areas and private holdings. 4) Access roads, shops. 5) Planning of aqueducts and road drainage and passages for agricultural machinery.	1) Details of house plan, determination of materials, division into operational stages, available budget, location of house on the plot according to principles of access, wind direction and other climatic factors 2) Entrance to plot, storage, water supply and drainage.

Contributions by other members of the team at this stage constitute information from the hydrologist who provides data on the advantages or limitations of certain sectors. The mapping of this information provides another criteria for the classification of the land sectors. From this map the planner is able to determine possible foci or activity and marginal zones, where correlation between the two criteria (land-use and Land potential) exists.

On the basis of this information, the architect may prepare an alternative conceptual plan expressing the preliminary estimate of size of unit, the number of families that may be settled in the region, and a calculation of gross-net area (i.e., the relationship between usable and non-usable land), by

eliminating lands with poor soils, low irrigation potential, and steep, stony areas.

Preliminary planning at the regional level: The team conducts a detailed re-examination of data and maps already drawn up to clarify any points which require elucidation and avoid mistakes at a later stage.

Preliminary planning includes the delineation of the communication system, if none exists, or the mapping of the existing system in the case of an already settled region. In planning the communication network, consideration must be given to general topography, and the relations of the region concerned with its wider hinterland, including urban centres and other foci of regional importance.

Detailed planning at the regional level: After discussion with members of other disciplines the decision on the type of settlement or the objective of resettlement is taken. Feasibility planning at the sub-regional level: This stage marks the initiation of the phase or micro-planning. Using the first generalised map as a basis for work, the planner deals with sectors of the region, each one constituting a consolidated group of villages.

The scale or maps required for this stage is larger since they will be used to calculate and designate areas for various land-uses according to crops and farm types outlined in the detailed agricultural plan. The relation between the gross-net areas for land-use must be calculated on the basis of detailed or semi-detailed soil maps. It must be emphasised that the greater the degree of detail, the more effect possible errors will have on the planned settlement system.

The size of agricultural holdings is determined by planned land-use. If, at this stage, the original agricultural concept proves unworkable in the light of further detailed information, the constraints must be explained to the agro-economist who will attempt to find a compromise between the original objectives and the reality of the situation.

After a positive decision has been made on the sub-region, the physical planner begins to work on creating a balance between the various settlements in the sub-region, in order to form conditions suitable for a broad rural community. To this end, it is necessary to calculate and create a state of equilibrium between the mean centres of the villages. Before the final decision is made, the planner must suggest alternative village groupings to bring before the team for discussion.

Preliminary planning at the sub-regional level: The material is re-examined by the team with the aim of drawing conclusions from the various

alternatives suggested, and in the light of information obtained from related disciplines. At this stage the first economist considerations are examined which may either limit or encourage development.

Detailed planning of sub-region: This stage involves the comparative analysis of the plan worked out to date, in the light of information obtained during the preliminary planning stage. The physical planner must now prepare an estimate of costs of the infrastructure, building costs and services. After this, the decision is taken to proceed to the operational level of planning, and as mentioned in the previous section, this involves work at the settlement and home plot level.

Feasibility planning at the settlement level: The settlement consists of the home plot, the cultivated areas, and the village centre. Depending on the physical and human factors of the region, the settlement may be either a concentrated or a dispersed unit (see diagrams on various types of settlement);

The size of the settlement depends on three main factors:

- a. Land area available.
- b. Community type desired.
- c. Class of economic activity (intensive – extensive).

At this stage, the population estimate (i.e. number of families) for the settlement should be prepared according to the net area available in the village, the farm type which will in turn determine the size of the home plot. The population structure of the settlement can be estimated by building age-sex pyramids which illustrate the percentage of children of school age (primary and kindergarten levels), those in secondary school age, etc. The agricultural needs of the settlement according to the agro-economic plan, for manpower in farming and technical services, may be used as an index to calculate the number of pupils required in vocational training to fill the estimated posts in the planned settlement. The same method can be used to calculate the number of persons required in other occupations (teaching, administration, commerce, etc.) to give a programmatic occupational breakdown of the village population.

The feasibility stage of village planning also includes calculation of the relationships between the areas for agricultural and other uses (public spaces and roads). These factors serve as a method of examining the efficiency of planning in the settlement, and supply data to the architect regarding distances. The important inter-village distances are those from home to centre, walking distances within the centre, length of internal roads, etc. In

order to minimise walking distances the architect must determine the width of the front of the land holdings, and plan the roads which join access ways to the holdings.

The object of this exercise is to reach a minimum length of internal roads which reduces costs of the infrastructure. The way to achieve this aim is to utilise both sides of the roads (i.e., to build on either side) and to minimise the number of access roads without buildings alongside them. This objective may be attained if planning is adapted to the topographical structure, and roads located on the anticline in problematic physical conditions. Under ideal conditions, the aim should be to concentrate a maximum number of land holdings along axis which are equidistant from the village centre. Once all the above information is collated and mapped accurately, the team may prepare the conceptual plan of the settlement.

- **Preliminary planning at the settlement level:** At this stage the planner may turn the conceptual plan or programme of the settlement, drawn up during the feasibility stage, into more practical planning material in the form of a master plan. This includes the general outline of the village's building plan on the basis of information collated and decisions taken at the feasibility phase. The building plan relates to the precise location of the structures within the village, based on topographical considerations (slopes, for example) which influence the gross-net limits of the settlement. In addition, it deals with the design of the internal communications systems, on the basis of considerations for economy of infrastructure.

Basic data for the building plan include calculations of standard distances between buildings and the furthest feasible distance between the land holdings and the village centre. In the light of the planned character of the settlement (depending on whether the economy is extensive or intensive), the form of the village and its relative consolidation or dispersal will be expressed as a function of internal distances.

The building plan also relates to the extent of planned housing, residences for the younger generation and type of agricultural structures to be erected.

The phase must also give expression to the principles of surface drainage (with the professional assistance of the hydraulic engineer) and, in the case of problematic topography where obstacles to cultivation exist, the need for levelling of the surface must be decided.

- **Detailed planning at the settlement level:** Here, the planner's task includes the detailed allocation of the land holdings in the village and preparation for the builder's survey, according to the agricultural plan

and agricultural requirements. Further detailed work is put into the planning of the village's public land areas, with plans for public buildings and open spaces for recreation. Attention should be paid to those areas which are unsuitable for building, and uses should be designated for them as public parks or sports' grounds.

The detailed building plans must include precise determinations of the size of structures both in the private and public sectors. Calculations of the size of public buildings are made according to the programmatic population estimates mentioned in the previous section, depending on the proposed number of users for the various service functions.

Attention must also be paid to access roads to land holdings, houses, shops and other services, with emphasis on concentrated parking and footpaths. Similarly, the access ways and service roads for agricultural machinery must be carefully planned. Detailed expression should also be given to road drainage on the basis of the hydrological information obtained at the preliminary planning stage.

The settlement plan, which is expressed in precise detail based on accurate calculation (such as % of land on the plots which may be built, % of open space, width of roads, length of building fronts, etc.), must also take into account land areas for future requirements, and a certain percentage of the total village area designated as reserve for future development.

- **Feasibility planning on the home plot:** The standard of residential unit is determined according to considerations related to the level of investment proposed, compared with the objectives of the agricultural plan and expected income per family. The feasibility stage also includes discussion on the type of farmyard needed, since this too is a function of the agricultural plan.
- **Preliminary planning of the home plot:** This stage includes general planning of the farmyard, the type of structure of the farm and its building standards.
- **Detailed planning of the home plot:** The family plot is usually divided into two sections: one for housing and the other for agricultural requirements. Detailed planning of the house must be carried out according to phases of implementation, which depend to a great extent on the budget available. Building materials will also be determined according to budgetary considerations in the light of physical needs of the specific area (i.e. topographical and climatic factors which give rise to various building requirements such as wind-proofing, insulation, or cement support on slopes, etc.).

The location of the house on the plot will be determined according to considerations of access from the main road and to other adjacent housing, wind direction and other climatic factors such as slope and direction of runoff, sunlight, etc.

Various systems exist for communication between houses on the plots:

- a. **The frontal system:** This is most widely used and its advantage lies in the fact that all agricultural buildings are located at the back of the site. The chief disadvantage is the great length of road required (see Figure 35).
- b. **Dual system:** Frontal pedestrian footpaths and service roads. The advantage of this system is its easy maintenance and aesthetic value. Two main disadvantages exist: their high cost and the fact that they divide the family holding (see Figure 36).

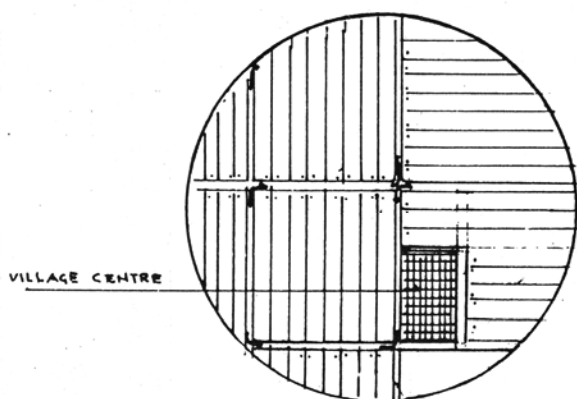
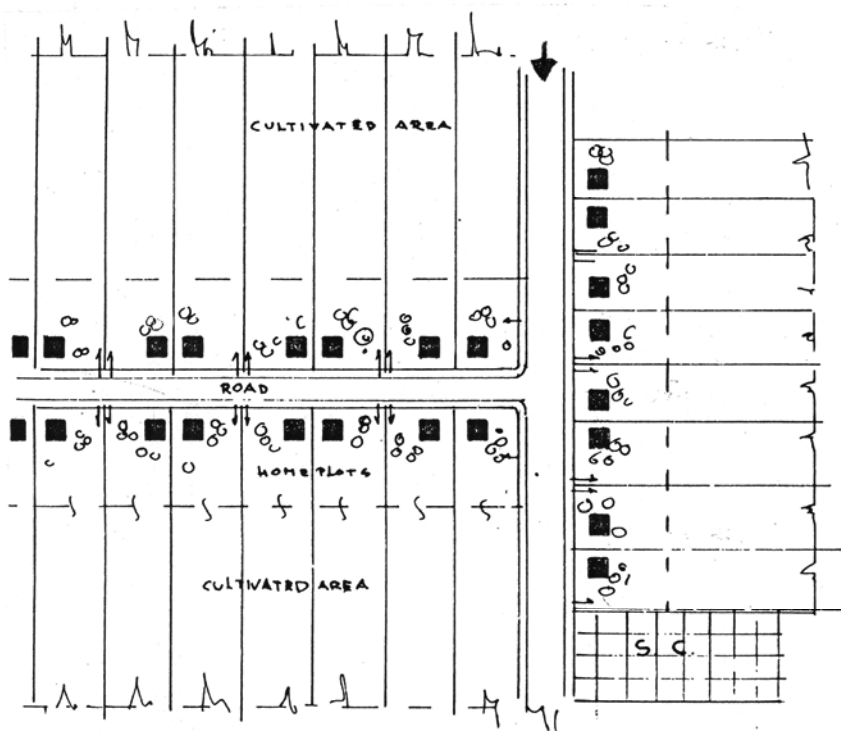


Figure 35: Model of rural settlement: frontal system with access from one road to the land holding

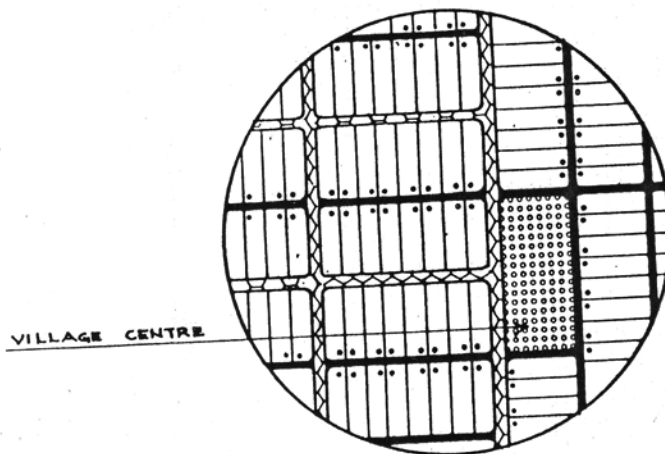
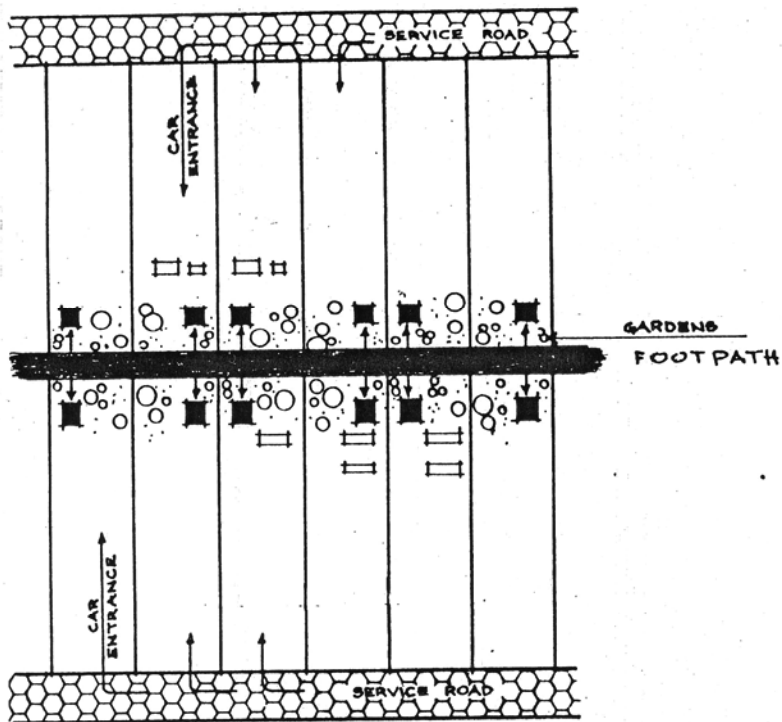


Figure 36: Model of rural settlement: Dual system with access from the home-gardens to the dwellings (houses).

- a. **Ring road:** In this system the road encircles all the holdings and is used for vehicles and services. All the fronts of the radial holdings may be considered as a single unit (see Figure 37).

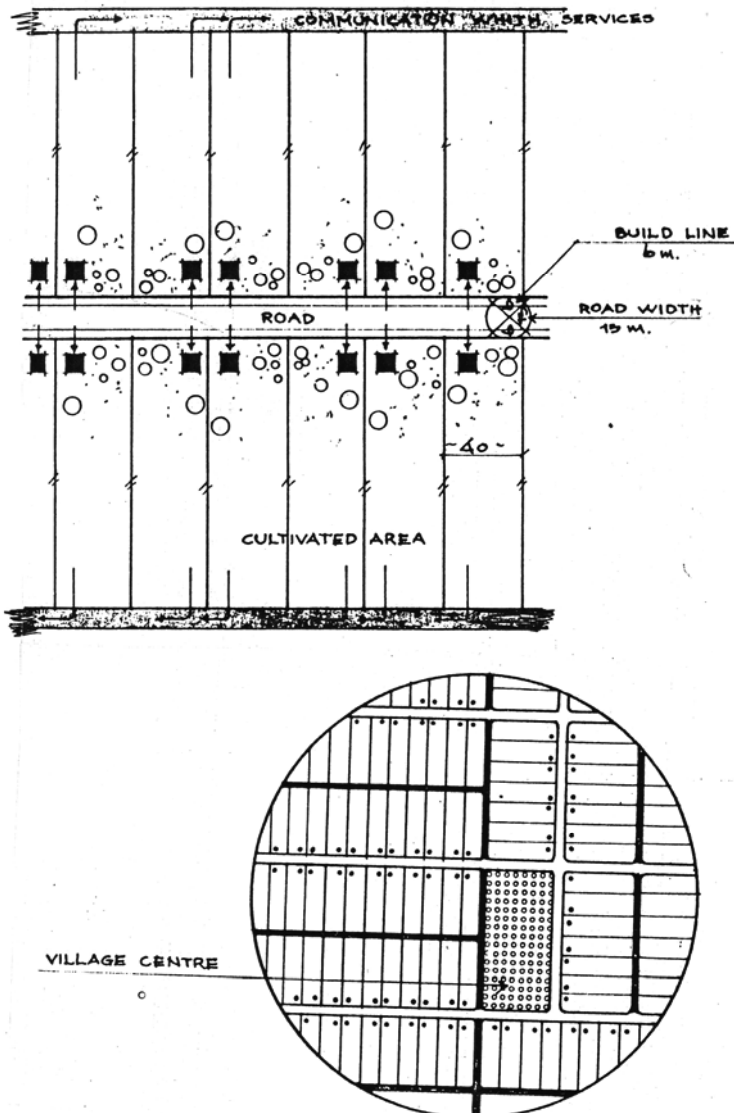


Figure 37: Model of rural settlement: Ring Road system with access from the road to the houses.

- b. **Roads with wells:** This is a system of communication which also solves the problem of drinking water in areas where this question arises. A well may be drilled for the common use of 6 – 8 families. These wells should be aligned along the roads to enable convenient access for the families concerned. In addition to solving the water problem, these wells may also serve as foci of attraction for the daily social life of the population. (Type of African tribal audience) (See Figure 38).

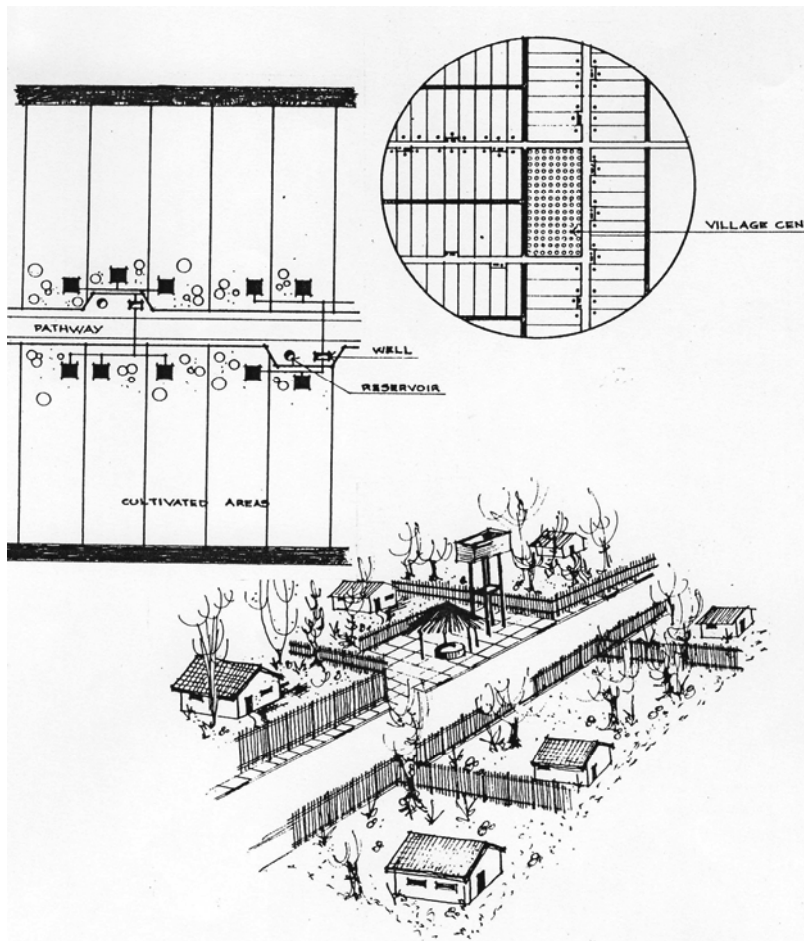


Figure 38: Rural settlement model: Linear system with wells and reservoirs for communal use.

- c. **Neighbourhood system:** This road system is based on the traditional family structure. Planning for the extended family grouping consists of a courtyard with access ways between the houses. This idea derives from the pattern of settlement dominant in tribal societies where kinship relationships determine the residential framework. (See Figure 39).
- d.

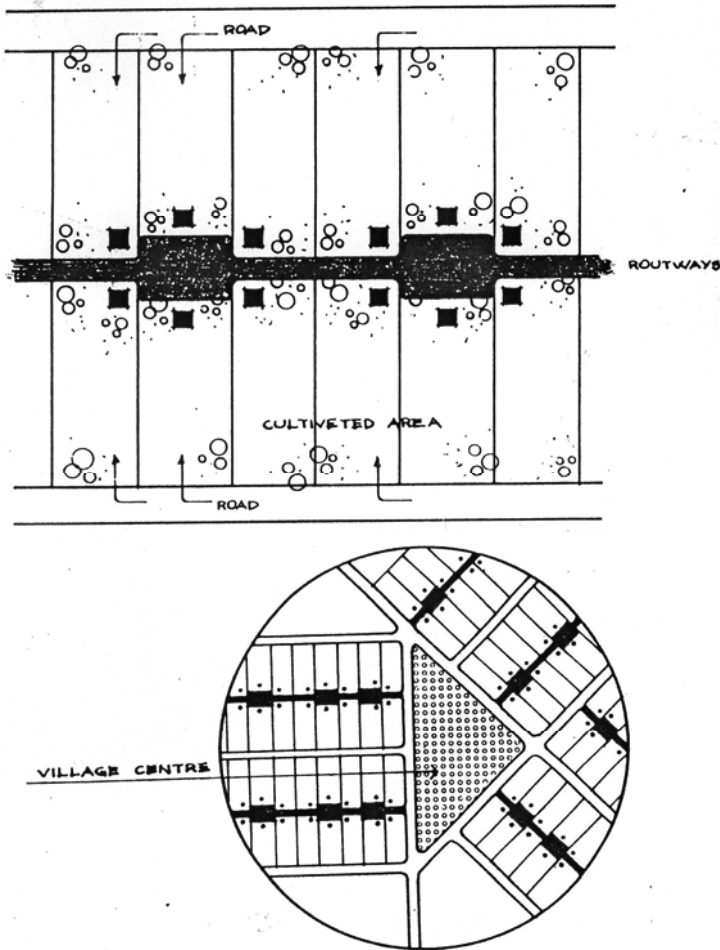


Figure 39: Model of rural settlement: compound system with large family and several houses according to traditional behaviour of tribes-Neighbourhood system.

Characteristics of new agricultural development areas

The determination of new development regions occurs on the political level of the governmental authorities. The decision process and their criteria have been illustrated in the previous sections.

The importance for the technical team functioning on inter-disciplinary teamwork is to characterise the proposed planning area according to clear definitions of four characteristics. Projects of:

- a. Agricultural development in a settled area without any actual agricultural activities (Rehabilitation project).
- b. Existing agricultural area with low level of activity; only subsistence crops being cultivated (improved project).
- c. New development areas or non-cultivated area (virgin land) with the target to settle new farmers based on new patterns of communities (Settlement project).
- d. New development areas to be cultivated by public or private enterprises based on external manpower (production project).

- Technical Material and Data Requirements

The four above mentioned models have several common denominators in the preparation of the technical material in the following fields:

- a. Soil survey and classification.
- b. Land use and agricultural potential.
- c. Topographic mapping.
- d. Existing infrastructure survey (Planametrics).
- e. Determination of socio-economic parameters.
- f. Marketing and production data.

This information is important for the planning of all the above models to ensure efficient teamwork.

The data and information must be superimposed on equal background maps. With the mosaic of all the crossing and complementary facts, the planners have an important tool to select the proposed areas for planning, thus eliminating doubts and constraints about marginal areas.

Stages in the development of integrated agricultural projects

The previous section illustrates the process of establishing the policy and the means which are required to assist in making decisions of choosing a development project.

- a. Improving economic and social conditions in a populated but undeveloped area to increase productivity and income.

- b. To develop sparsely populated areas by using an integrated settlement system and by establishing new villages and service centres.
- c. To develop and to increase agricultural production and thereby reduce their imports.

The above are the most popular reasons for development, but in any case development starts with the planning process. According to the specific characteristics of the project, a planning team is chosen to tackle the economic and social problems encountered during planning and implementation stages. The following proposal is given from the point of view of rural architectural planning. The planning process of such projects includes the following stages of activities:

- a. Land survey, land use capability evaluation and classification.
- b. Pinpoint surface and ground water sources and make decisions about alternative irrigation systems and potable water sources.
- c. Agricultural farm planning in stages.
- d. Physical target planning, allocation of land use in intensively irrigated and extensively rain-fed farming.
- e. Villages and service centre planning, road networks, agro-industrial zones, etc.

Attention to these stages enables the planning team to organise continuous teamwork. The final stages are laminations on which interdisciplinary planning should be based. Careful treatment of the work stages as listed is also a useful tool to check and minimise mistakes during planning.

The planning team selects detailed alternatives according to the technical criteria. The basic political decisions should serve as a planning guide.

The planning team should respond to the following questions before beginning the planning stages:

- a. Are the technical material, information and data adequate?
- b. Are the goals set up by the decision-makers contradictory to the given information?
- c. Which are the required methods to attain these goals?
- d. What kind of additional disciplines are necessary for planning? For instance, what kind of multi-disciplinary specialists and the size of the team?

After answering these questions the team is ready to start planning. Based on the gathered and checked information, the team starts to prepare detailed maps in order that most of the information will be overlaid on the same base map. The choice of scale depends on the size of the area – the larger the area, the smaller the scale, otherwise the area must be divided into sections. It

is advisable to select the sheet division along natural boundaries or roads, channels, etc.

The next step is to delineate the arable land blocks, marginal land and other problematic areas that will need further studies, and to calculate their area. The results should be listed chronologically, as in the following example.

	Land use	Type	Surface area (ha)	Sub total	Total
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Main Components of Rural Settlement and Services

Planning proceeds with the translation of data into practice. The team is ready to start with village location and parcelling of farm units. (See Figure 40).

The planners have to take into account certain principles before dealing with the main components of the settlement:

- a. The social and communal structure of the existing or proposed village.
- b. Size of farm unit, cultivated area and occupancy.
- c. Proposed farm type and specific agricultural systems.
- d. Equalised land distribution between villages according to soil types and classification.
- e. Create the maximum balanced distance between the villages, cultivated blocks and service centre.

Each new or existing village is composed of the following: the home plot, the farm buildings, plot, the cultivated area, the village centre and the main service centre. See models in figures 41 and 42.

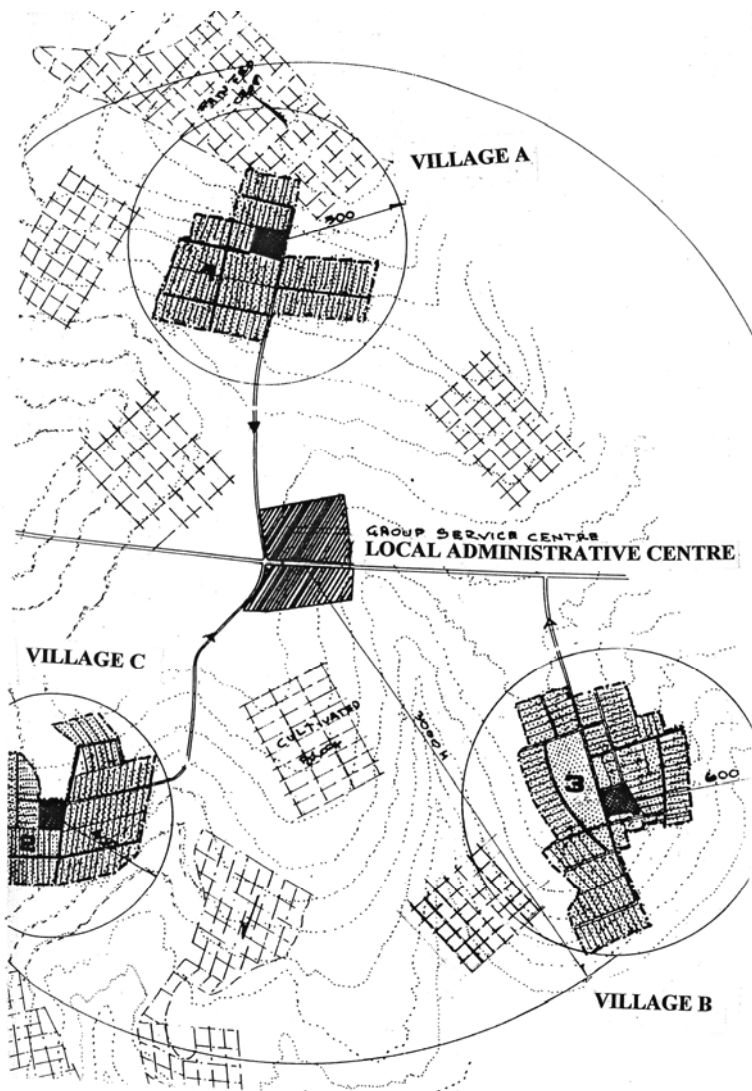


Figure 40: Model of rural settlement: village group system with group services centre at the district headquarter (local administrative centre).

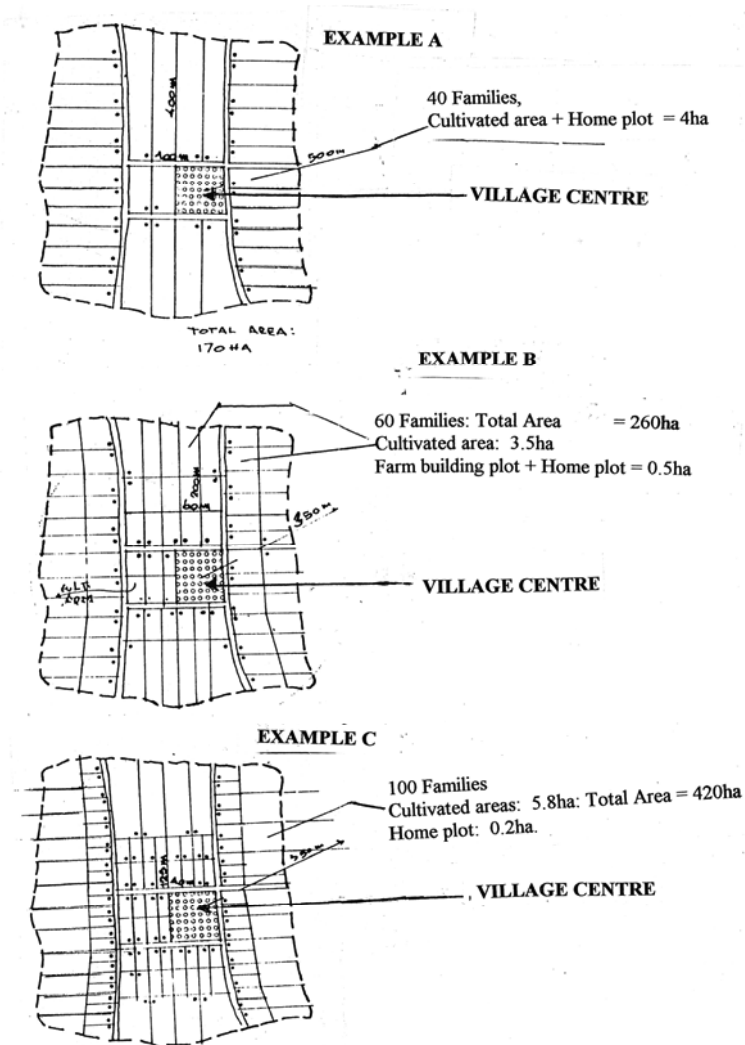


Figure 41: Comparative examples of some types of planned rural settlements

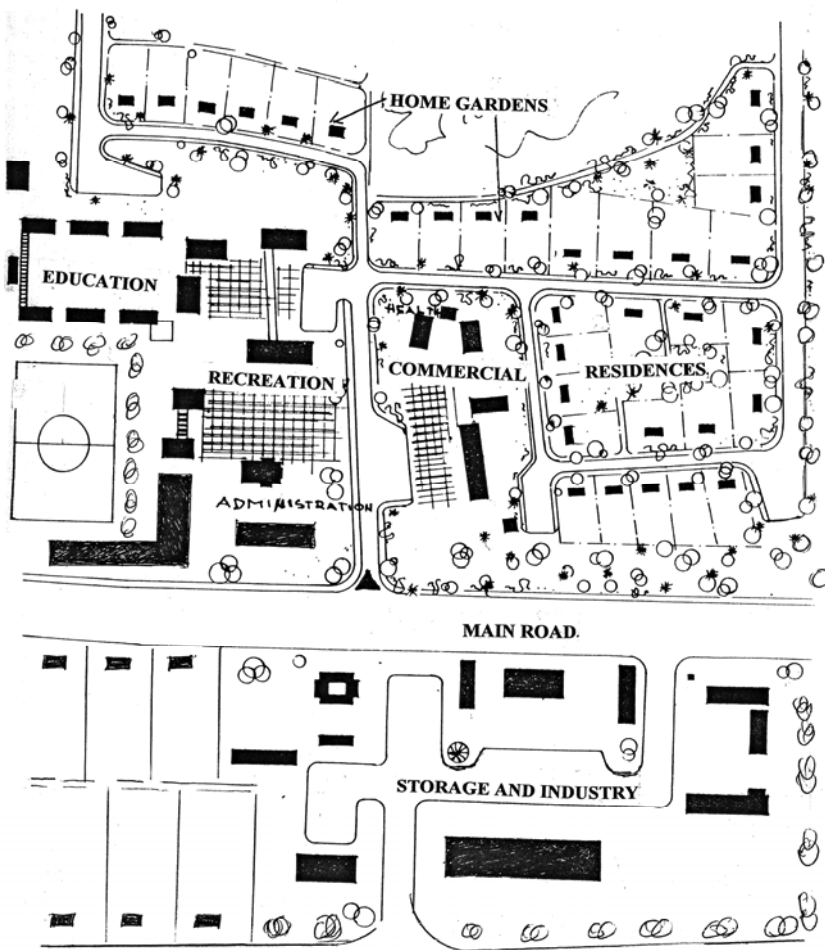


Figure 42: Rural settlement with model of a group service centre at the district level

New Village Planning

The first step in planning a new village or in rehabilitating an existing one is the processing of the data.

- Demographic calculations, using basic statistical data, regarding: age groups, educational groups, occupations, etc. for the social and education system.

- Translation of the details of the economic and organisational plan into physical data (crops, cultivation system, yield, storage, marketing, consumption).
- Determination of norms and standards for a road network, public areas, drainage and sewage, building intervals (Regulations of Village Building).
- Determination of the number of families is a function of an administrative decision or of existing conditions.
- The primary calculation of the net area required for building should include:
 - o home plot: a house for the farmer, a second house for a son, storage, and shed
 - o farm building plot: according to the type of farm planned
 - o village service centre: central storage facilities, school and kindergarten, social centre, recreation facilities, health clinic, administrative facilities, etc.

The public buildings are a function of the level of proposed services, number of families and their occupations.

The following table was prepared on the basis of 80 families, on farm plot of 1 ha + 3 ha, and carrying out intensive cultivation.

Table 7: Preliminary calculations for a village of 80 families: Home plot 1 ha + cultivated farm unit 3ha

Village site		Sub total	Total
Home plot	80 x 1 ha + 15%	92 ha	100 ha
Roads	$\frac{80 \times 40 \times 16\text{m}}{2} + 20\%$	3ha	
Service centre	2500m2 x 5 + 50%	2ha	
Miscellaneous		3ha	
Farm unit	80 x 3ha + 20%	288 ha	300 ha
Miscellaneous		12 ha	
Population: (According to statistical figures) 80 families x (6 members) = 480 20% school age (6 – 14) = 96 educational need = 3 classrooms			
Agricultural services to be calculated from the proposed farm planning			

The Chronological Steps of Village Planning

Village site selection

- Select the proposed map in the chosen uniform scale and mark the following:
 - natural boundaries
 - water courses
 - main water divides, ridges and crests
 - cross sections and length profiles to demonstrate the typical slopes.
- Calculate the average percentage of slope for possible irrigation systems, etc.

Determination of the Home Plot

- Calculation of the home plot size is as follows: the proposed area, divided by optimum front length of plot (approx. 40m), multiplied by depth of the proposed plot.
- The preliminary calculation is important for the determination of the number of farmers and size of the village. To the result of this calculation 10% should be added as a security margin to cover losses due to slopes of up to 2%, while 15% should be added for sharper slopes.
- To the above, one should add the area required for a road network. This is calculated as follows: total frontal length of home plots by +20% for eventual connecting roads x width of roads (16 – 20m).
- Calculate the proposed built-up area at the village centre (social, commercial and agricultural services buildings) x 5 (the normative ratio of a built-up area to its surrounding open space is 1:5).

One should take into account the need for parks, parking lots and playgrounds, which add 50% to the total area allocated for public use.
- Upon reaching the total area required for the planned village, the site for it may be chosen.

Selection of the Most Suitable Area for the Village Site

- The road network should be set up so that the distance between each two parallel roads (according to contour lines) is the depth of two plots.
- Express the above by architectural criteria:
 - creation of open spaces
 - environmental development
 - convenient and pleasant accesses to home plots and public area
 - entrance to village, that is, a composition of spatial views which will fit the natural surroundings and blend with them.

The Cultivated Farm Units

The principles to be used by the planner for the cultivated farm unit are relatively similar to those used for the home plot, but here planning should be made in close consultation with the agronomist and the irrigation engineer.

- During the process of parcellation of the farm units, 20% should be added to the proposed farm unit area as a margin for land losses due to roads and pathways, and land irregularities due to topographical conditions.

In case of rain-fed crops, the average percentage to be added for the above losses can be decreased.

- Preparation of estimates prior to the planning process.

The main objective of this book has been to give some examples based on experiences accumulated in decentralisation projects and various previous rural physical planning projects reported by Porat (1988). The examples and data used elucidate problems and situations that the planner may encounter during the planning process. The wide range of options considered is an advantage for a culturally and ecologically diverse country such as Cameroon. Chapter eight examines the allocation of roles between the state, local district organisation and civil society as they relate to the spatial planning and socio-economic development of rural districts.

Decentralisation and Regionalization: Recipe for Sustainable Local Development

Regional policy in the sense of planning is an on-going process in a political system, which is concerned with spatial organization in an integrative manner, and incorporates the design, establishment and implementation of desired structural organization of land. In Cameroon, like many sub-Saharan African countries the state is yet to play this role. The role of the state is exclusively economic in character, without reference to space – spatial planning is absent. The formulation of guidelines for spatial development at the overall level of a state is inadequate. In the age of globalization, there is a visible trend in Cameroon towards decentralization. Unfortunately, this is a slow process requiring both institutional and human capacity building. The allocation of roles between the state, local district organization and civil society is still very slow. This long anticipated changed framework can open up new possibilities for regional and multi-disciplinary spatial planning in rural areas in which all sections of the population participate.

Decentralization

Transfer of decision-making powers to the more directly concerned, lower levels of government and administrative authority is termed decentralization. The general arguments for decentralization are:

- The primary objective for reform from a centralized government to a decentralized one is to bring government closer to the people in the interest of efficiency. People become more aware of the cost of the services they use, and the administration can take better account of their socio-economic wishes.
- It has also been presented as being beneficial to the economy as a whole, mainly by means of a more equitable distribution of national resources and fiscal advantages such as easier tax collection.
- It promotes the democratic involvement of citizens in local government decisions. Local democracy is more effective than national democracy, because citizen's participation in local decision-making continues beyond the ballot box.
- It may also support and develop a social and cultural identity at local level. The local authority as service providers is defined in part by its social and cultural functions.

Regionalization

The region is a significantly practicable level of spatial planning. In an area usually defined by multiple functions, comprising a territory with a sub-national demarcation but covering many localities, supra-local and multidisciplinary regional planning facilitates spatial policy and problem-solving for a lasting improvement in structure. The term local government is used in this connection. It is used to designate the regional level of government as well, for example the government of a province or region.

In Cameroon, the focus is placed on the region as the level at which spatial policy action is implemented. When viewed by people below (grassroots), this level still enables people to identify with it and to have sufficient freedom to feel commitment within a manageable framework (participatory element), whilst, when seen from above, the region achieves the critical mass (the size) which is sufficiently large for the implementation of economic and social policies. The region is therefore the midway between individuality and globalization.

Regionalization versus globalization

The increasing trend towards regionalization is not unique to Cameroon. It is a world-wide phenomenon and many African countries in the democratization process are adopting it. The policy of decentralization brings the regions more prominently into the forefront. This process requires that the government delegates administrative, fiscal and policy responsibilities to regional administrative bodies at sub-national level. This is a learning process and the outstanding regulations for implementation are lagging behind political rhetoric. This learning process must lead to the recognition that the state is not the overriding authority, but functions as one player alongside other regional players. Although the state determines the general framework, regional players can nevertheless influence the substance of regulations.

Globalization and regionalization have the effect of multiplying the number of actors involved in development. Generally, in the age of globalization the country's development policy is the result of dialogue conducted with multinational development agencies, international non-governmental organizations and sub-national regional bodies such as regions or provinces, divisions, subdivisions, districts or municipalities. These institutions, organized on a territory basis, are the appropriate partners, for planning purposes in the development process.

Regionalization which reflects local people's growing demand for a right to participate in shaping the conditions, in which they have to live, thus turns out to be an expression of regional identity. In consequence, government institutions taking responsibility for negotiations, coordination and

regulation, play an important role at sub national level in the planning of development promotion measures, in order to achieve more balance structures and conditions. Globalization also brings new channels of communication and information with world-wide communications, financial transfers, and the flow of information, and therefore opens up significant opportunities for remote regions and peripheral localities. However, links with patterns of western industrialized countries may mould regions and municipalities on lines similar to western models, leaving them no opportunity for choice, especially with regard to the evolution of indigenous models of planning and development. Regionalization must aim at counteracting such a tendency. It must seek to promote the adaptation of institutions to local framework conditions. Thus regional, sub-divisional and district identity can be tapped and indigenous elements in society can be mainstreamed in institutions. This certainly keeps the planning process accessible to local people.

Regional and local institutions can also benefit from globalization by seeking information or funding to circumvent the national authorities by making use of new information and communication technology. The local mayor in his district town, equipped with lap top, and modern, and no longer exclusively reliant on sporadic information from the capital city (thousands of kilometres away) can exchange models of transport infrastructure by e-mail with the planning office in the town's European twin city. The state must define to what extent regions may incur debts in international financial markets. This is particularly important because it has considerable influence on regional planning.

Globalization induces competition between regions. If regions conduct the marketing of their specific local advantages world-wide, investors also have the opportunity to compare a number of regions with each other in a minimal amount of time and at lower cost, and to decide which of them is the most suitable for their purposes.

Planning with Regional Institutions

A necessary precondition for rural development planning is the sound basis of effective organizations and institutions possessing the appropriate authority, that is, a control system which directs and administers both the activities of organizations and individuals, and the interactions between all relevant groups and negotiations between parties involved. Regional institutions act as a forum for public and private players enabling objectives and development options to be worked out for the region, strategies to be formulated for the regional development together with alternatives and providing better management for their resources (natural resources,

locational advantages, manpower and services amongst others). Regional institutions of civil society which do not possess any decision-making authority cannot replace the state institutions at a regional level – instead they should complement them.

The successful voluntary collaboration between civil society and authorities in regional institutions depends on:

- The organizational capabilities of groups at municipal level;
- The readiness and ability of the public powers to locally integrate relevant groups into the planning processes.

Only decentralized regional administrative organizations are in a position to make a sustainable improvement in development planning at regional level. At the intermediate regional level between the local and national state level, institutions are needed which are capable of assuming mediation role; they must be sufficiently robust to be capable of mediating. At the same time, the differing demands of society must be taken into account, and the way in which the benefits of development measures, as well as its costs and risks, are to be shared must be determined. This demands collaborative understanding of planning by public and private actors, with the aim of establishing the ability to reach consensus in the planning process; this means, in turn, that the public actors must have a new understanding of their role. The central concern of a consensus must be to improve the citizens', municipalities' and regions' opportunities to exert an influence. These institutions have to react to a number of factors:

- The changing needs of their members, technological progress, increasing or dwindling consensus among experts, and the pressures from non-members,
- The institutions must be sufficiently flexible to react quickly to changes that are global in origin such as financial crisis and domestic crisis, environmental crisis and other disturbances. This requires a completely new form of information management and the corresponding communication of knowledge for planning purposes.

Lessons from the Current Wave of Decentralisation

The objectives of decentralization and the anticipated results or justification are not very clear. The reasons for drawing up the decentralization programmes are diverse. It is generally presented as a means of streamlining national institutions and transferring political decision-making power to the citizen. Sometimes it is also projected as the key to large-scale raising of living standards and reducing social disparities. On a closer examination, this simply translates into extending the power of the ruling party or coalition out

from its urban heartland into the countryside. This is where central government, unable to redistribute the resources needed to finance services in rural areas, seeks to mask the lack by transferring responsibilities to newly created local bodies – but without the resources needed to fulfil them. Civil society supports decentralization for less political reasons. These include:

- Decentralization puts relations between the citizen and the administration and between local and central government on a market economy footing. Various explanations offered by the neo-liberal school of economic theory, including institutional economics, contend that the relationship between the citizen and local government and between the local/regional authorities and the State is based on an individually negotiated contract (in contrast to the equal or subordinate relationship in collective and communitarian systems).
- Decentralization is a response to the change functions and reduced regulatory capacity of the State and the more differentiated demands on the public purse. In societies which have rid themselves of dictatorships and in which economic growth has created a discriminating new middle class with a growing interest in public affairs, decentralization can contribute to developing institutions which involve citizens and are capable of meeting their demands.
- In some cases decentralization is also justified on the grounds of economic restructuring, when State-owned enterprises headquartered in the capital are broken up into separate private businesses with strong ties to the regional or local market or labour pool. The same applies when technological changes in production and information generate successful smaller businesses, freed from a sense of obligation towards what from their viewpoint is an inefficient centralized State.
- Decentralization is supposed to create a strong communication link of genuine representation between the citizen and his or her elected representative. That relationship is put to the test on election day at the latest. The periodic elections have proved insufficient to achieve this, for two reasons:
- The voter has no real choice. In most instances in the country voting is determined by religious or ethnic affinities, where the relationship between voter and representative is overlaid by social and family ties, or where local party organizations are geared to central party priorities.
- Periodic decisions on the membership of administrative bodies do not constitute sharing the benefits of local democracy. Citizen participation in local affairs is simply put on hold again until the next election, particularly in areas where local councillors are elected by popular acclaim in a spirit of “executive democracy”.

Such examples serve to confirm the fear that democracy at the local level is a myth. Moreover, it is argued, there is no continuity in the election process. Elections are about individuals; in the absence of political parties or other intermediate structures, policy programmes are at best a marginal consideration.

One key result of autonomous decision-making by local and regional government is their development priorities, as laid down in development or budget plans. Often, whether intentionally or unintentionally, these are not in line with the content of national programmes. This may concern not only priorities or structures, but also the rules, procedures and organization of planning or budget management. Conflict arises when a state contribution to financing local facilities is required. The Finance Ministry is not readily adapting its regulations and procedures to take account of new decision-making powers of local and regional authorities.

A more democratic approach can be undertaken by ensuring that decisions are made through locally elected councils. Block grants from the state can be made available as key ingredients to ensure that decisions made by local councils can be at least partially implemented. Additional funds have to be sought from sectoral ministries at the national level. By organizing and mobilizing the communities, a process for bottom-up planning, decision-making and implementation can be initiated. Several planning levels can be introduced. In pursuance of bottom-up approach, the different levels to be considered are: household, settlement, ward (quarter), village, district (almagamation of villages), division, region and nation.

Elected district and village level councils provide a forum for local level representatives to prioritize the communities' development needs and requirements and to allocate the available resources in an equitable and transparent manner. Sectoral ministries and the National Planning Commission (NPC) should be instituted to ensure that community defined projects, which cannot be funded from the locally available resources, are allocated the necessary funds. For this to take place a prioritization process from the community through to the national level is undertaken. Since resource allocations are carried out at the village, district, division, region and national levels, these are the most important levels in the system. Allocating annually fixed funds to each of these levels ensures that local development priorities are funded immediately. If fiscal management is improved at both the village and district level, then it is to be expected that additional funds could be made available by sectoral ministries and the NPC.

Mobilization of the communities into organized groups is an intensive and time-consuming task. The government may not have the organizational set up and logistics to assist the communities to organize themselves. This

task can be realized through donor projects or through non-governmental organizations. Once communities are organized, they begin to undertake their own planning for their village. At the village level a development committee prepares an overall plan for the village based on the prioritized needs of the district. The agreed upon village plans are forwarded to the district level (Rural Council) and eventually to the divisional, regional and national level. Small projects which can be funded from the village block grant can be implemented. Development projects requiring more funds are referred to the next higher level. This process is undertaken all the way up the chain until it reaches the national level, that is, the district will allocate funds from its district block grant to support village development activities and the remaining projects are forwarded to the divisional level (plate 30).

Currently, the allocation of funds at the national level does not take into account the prioritized requirements of villages. The process of registering their needs has not been developed and is not democratic. With the election of a village and district councils democratic structures should be institutionalized for planning, prioritizing and allocating scarce public resources. Through the mobilization process, communities can learn how to plan and implement projects either completely on their own or in private and public partnerships. Small social and economic projects result from this process. In this way the cost of development projects can be considerably reduced since the communities provide a sizeable contribution to the project cost (approximately 10% or more of the total costs).



Plate 30: Village council in dialogue with community members: Organisation and mobilisation of local people fosters civic participation and user participation in projects.

In addition, the community ensures that quality work is done and also undertakes to maintain the infrastructure. Current practices by the government of contracting work out have proved to be both more costly and produced poor quality projects, the reasons often being that the contractors cut costs and save money to increase their own profits. The next logical step in the process could be to provide communities and villages with the necessary funds that they in turn contract out the work and supervise the activities, particularly if they are also contributing in cash or kind to the costs of the project.

The pilot programme of decentralization presented in table 8 is based on a simple but radical principle. All the local offices of the sectoral ministries, that is, provincial, divisional and sub-divisional governments at the second, third and fourth levels of government are disbanded, and their functions, resources and staff transferred to the corresponding units of the autonomous local government. From the table it is apparent that all the sectors are represented at district level or local government. The Ministry of Interior or Territorial Administration must first open negotiations with the sector ministries and Regional Delegations (regional government) to determine which functions should be transferred and how the divisional and district administrations should be structured. This should involve not only the transfer of competences, but most importantly the transfer of the related resources, that is, “development budget”. Such a transfer increases resources at the disposal of local government to perform their new functions and to execute their demand-driven development programmes.

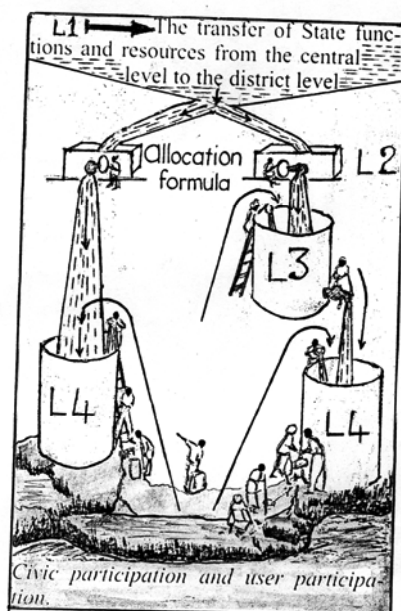


Figure 43: Development funds as flows from centre (L.1); through semi autonomous regional offices (L.2), semi autonomous divisional offices (L.3) to semi autonomous districts and village level supplemented by local resources (See table 8)

Table 8: Model of changes in Organizational Structure of Pilot decentralization programme (see figure 43)

Central Level (Level 1)	Sector Ministries			
Regional Level (Level 2)	Regional Delegations (Deconcentration)	Offices of Semi autonomous (Decentralization)		
Divisional Level (Level 3)	Representatives of sector Ministries at divisional level (Deconcentration)	Representative of offices of semi autonomous Regional Government (Deconcentration)	Offices of Semi autonomous Divisional Governments (Decentralization)	
District Level (Level 4)	Representatives of Sector Ministries at district level (Deconcentration)	Representatives of offices of semi autonomous Regional Government (Deconcentration)	Representatives of office of semi autonomous Divisional Government (Deconcentration)	Offices of semi autonomous District Governments (Decentralization)

Negotiations for the transfer of tasks or functions and resources must involve the beneficiaries of decentralization at the programme design stage. District governments must be involved in order to avoid a top-down establishment of organizational structures. It should rather be a meeting point for the top-down and bottom-up approaches geared to the future workload and the needs of the individual district governments.

An important aspect of major importance for the performance of autonomous functions is control and supervision between various levels of government mentioned in table 8. Political decentralization also implies increased powers for local parliamentarians in relation to the executive. A well designed transfer of authority to the local level can help match public service provision more closely to the needs of local people only if the latter have the opportunity to control local policy-makers and demand accountability from them.

The main indicators for an evaluation of the decentralization programme include amongst others the following:

- Improved, more efficient local public services in the sectors.
- Increased involvement of civil society in decision-making and participation in development projects.
- The growth in revenue for district governments.
- A reduction in administrative red tapes, improved coordination, sound and faster decision-making by district governments.
- The endeavour of districts to perform their duties more efficiently and more in step with local needs.

The future perspectives for spatial rural development planning in the country will need to be based upon providing greater local autonomy, both in decision-making and financial terms, that is, inter-regional fiscal transfers will be needed with richer regions having to compensate for poorer ones. Effective linkages between community, regional and national planning need to be promoted while respecting the principle of subsidiarity. Regional planning remains the ideal merging point between bottom-up planning, that is, community priorities and top-down planning, that is, national policies.

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“IN THIS BOOK, NDENECHO DEVELOPS A FRAMEWORK FOR SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING WITH A FOCUS ON RURAL SETTLEMENTS. HE EMPHASISES THE FACT THAT THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL DECENTRALISATION ON URBAN – RURAL RELATIONS IN CAMEROON LIKE IN MANY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAS NOT RECEIVED MUCH ATTENTION SO FAR, AND THAT PRIORITY ATTENTION HAS BEEN PAID TO URBAN PLANNING TO THE DETRIMENT OF RURAL AREAS. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND THE BOOK ATTEMPTS TO TACKLE ONE QUESTION: HOW CAN DECENTRALISATION REACH THE RURAL POPULATION TOO, AND HOW CAN THIS BE TRANSLATED INTO IMPROVEMENTS IN RURAL LIVELIHOODS THROUGH SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING?”

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Despite rapid urbanisation, Africa remains predominantly rural. This calls for decentralisation beyond the dominant concern by states and government with urban spaces. Rural areas, rural development and the future of rural settlements need to be understood and addressed in the context of the ongoing democratisation trends and the emergence and development of civil society. States have tended to tame rather than serve civil society in Africa. By establishing a single cultural reference and imposing a centralised state, African governments have exacerbated the fragmentation of civil society. However, political pluralism has slowly been gaining ground since the 1990s. This book explores the scope for implementing decentralisation programmes that focus on citizens in rural areas. For the purpose of decentralisation, civic participation in local politics and user participation in development programmes must be seen as two sides of the coin. The book focuses on spatial planning – a process concerned with spatial organisation in an integrative manner, and incorporates the design, establishment and implementation of a desired spatial structural organisation of land. This is especially relevant in a context where the formulation of guidelines for spatial development at the overall level of a state is inadequate.

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